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The Dust of the Earth

By

KATHARINE KAVANAUGH



SERGEL'S ACTING DRAMA

No. 611

ART-WORKERS-LEAGUE

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1911

CAST OF CHARACTERS.

DAVID MOORE, of Maple Farm Cottage,
SUSAN MOORE, his wife,
ELIZABETH, their daughter,
JERRY, their son,
REV. DR. TEMPLETON, a young divine,
MISS ARABELLA, the village newspaper,
JOHN RYDER, the young master of The Maples,
WANDERING TOM, a mystery,
OLD MORSE, his companion,
NELL, "The dust of the earth."

ACT I

EXTERIOR OF MAPLE FARM

ACT II

INTERIOR OF MAPLE FARM COTTAGE

ACT III

WANDERING TOM'S CABIN

ACT IV

SAME AS ACT II

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THE DUST OF THE EARTH

ACT THE FIRST

Exterior of Maple Farm. September. House R. Rustic fence rear, with gate C. A tree down L. with rustic bench beneath it.

At rise of curtain, JERRY is seated on stage C. engaged in mending fishing rod.

JERRY. I'll be durned if I can fix this thing.

[Enter DAVID MOORE from house, stands on porch.]

DAVID. What are you doin' there, boy?

JERRY. Hello, Pop. Gettin' ready to go fishin', but I reckon the fish will get tired waitin' by the time I get through with this thing.

DAVID. *[Coming down R. C.]* Don't you ever think it worth while to do anything else but go fishin'?

JERRY. There ain't nothin' else worth while doin'. Besides, them fish would get lonesome if I didn't go down once in a while and bring a few of 'em home with me.

[Enter ELIZABETH, through gate, carries few letters in her hand.]

ELIZABETH. Good morning, father.

DAVID. Mornin', daughter; where have you been?

ELIZABETH. To the post-office; here's a letter for you—looks like an advertisement. *[Gives DAVID letter, crosses in front of him to the house R.]*

DAVID. *[Glances at letter, puts it in his pocket.]* Yep, shouldn't be surprised. Where's Nellie?

ELIZABETH. Oh, nobody ever knows where *she* is, or what

she's doing. I know where she ought to be—in the house helping mother with the work.

JERRY. [*Still engaged with fishing tackle.*] What's matter with you helpin' mother?

ELIZABETH. I'm not a servant—and she is.

DAVID. Now, that'll do, daughter. Nellie is no more of a servant than you are. I expect you both to help mother when she needs help, but it does seem to me you do very little.

JERRY. Yep—and Nell is always hustling.

ELIZABETH. Mother doesn't want me to do housework. Besides, that girl ought to be glad of the chance. What is she, anyway?

DAVID. She is your cousin, and my dead sister's child. She's as welcome to a home under my roof as one of my own children, and I won't have her treated as an outcast.

ELIZABETH. Oh, well, you always did show partiality where she was concerned. [*Enters house R.*]

[*DAVID goes up stage, looks off L.*]

JERRY. Aw, Sis makes me tired. She's always pickin' on Nell.

DAVID. Here comes the Minister—walkin' right fast, too. I shouldn't wonder if he'd been trying to catch up with Elizabeth.

JERRY. Yep—he's stuck on Sis—didn't you know it?

DAVID. Hush—he'll hear you.

[*Enter REV. DR. TEMPLETON, C.—shakes hands with DAVID.*]

DR. TEMPLETON. Good morning, Mr. Moore.

DAVID. Dr. Templeton—good morning, sir—glad to see you.

DR. TEMPLETON. Thank you, Mr. Moore. I'm always sure of a welcome here. [*Comes down L. c. glancing casually toward house.*] I thought I saw your daughter walking ahead of me. I tried to overtake her, but she is a better pedestrian than I am.

JERRY. [*Gathering up his fishing tackle.*] Yep—you know Sis went to a boardin' school and took physical tor-

ture. Why—every mornin' as soon as she wakes up, she stretches out in bed and kicks one leg up in the air and—

DAVID. Jerry! You young rascal. Remember Dr. Templeton's presence.

[DR. TEMPLETON *turns aside to hide a smile.*]

JERRY. [*Getting on his feet.*] I thought he'd like to hear about it. [*Goes up c.*] Well, so long—I'm goin' fishin'.

DR. TEMPLETON. I wish you luck, Jerry.

JERRY. [*With significant look toward house.*] Thanks—same to you. [*Exits c. going off R.*]

DR. TEMPLETON. [*Aside.*] The young rascal—how did he know what I came for.

DAVID. You mustn't mind Jerry, Dr. Templeton. Sometimes I think he ain't altogether right.

DR. TEMPLETON. On the contrary, I think he's a very intelligent boy. You may have remarked, Mr. Moore, that my visits here have been rather frequent since your daughter's return from boarding school.

DAVID. Well, to tell you the truth, sir, we're always so glad to have you that it don't seem as if you can come often enough.

DR. TEMPLETON. Now, that's putting it nicely. But—has it struck you that I might have had a particular object in coming?

DAVID. Well—I did fancy once or twice that Elizabeth might have had something to do with it.

DR. TEMPLETON. [*Laughs.*] There—you've helped me out of the hole. I didn't know just how to come to the point. It is true, sir, Elizabeth has been the lodestar that has drawn me here, and I have come today for the special purpose of asking for her hand.

DAVID. Well, of course I can't say about Elizabeth's, but there's my hand, sir [*Gives TEMPLETON his hand in a hearty grasp*], and I'll be proud and happy to call the Rev. Dr. Templeton my son-in-law.

DR. TEMPLETON. Indeed, I thank you. I only hope Elizabeth's will be given as readily. I would not have spoken so soon but that I feared a possible rival. [*Turns toward bench L.*]

DAVID. And who might that be?

DR. TEMPLETON. John Ryder, the young master of The Maples. I have seen him coming here quite often lately.

DAVID. Oh, yes, he gets lonesome up at the big house and comes down here for company. You see, this farm is part of the Maples estate.

DR. TEMPLETON. I believe he has been in Europe for quite a long time.

DAVID. Yes. That family always were great ones for rambling over the face of the earth. Why, the Maples is the handsomest estate in the county, and yet for the last fifteen years not one of them has lived there long enough for the country people to get acquainted with them.

DR. TEMPLETON. Who was the owner of the property before this young man came into possession? [*Sits on bench.*]

DAVID. [*Sits on porch R.*] Well, there's a story connected with that. You see this young Ryder is only a distant relation of the original owners; their name was Osbourne. The last one of that name that I remember was young Tom Osbourne. About eighteen years ago he lived up at the big house with his mother. They were great swells in those days—used to entertain a lot—always had the house full of company. I remember seeing young Thomas Osbourne riding about the country on horseback—and I tell you he could ride.

DR. TEMPLETON. Did you know him well?

DAVID. Oh, Lord, no. They were too high-tone for us. My sister Eleanor used to go up to the house sometimes when they had company to help Mrs. Osbourne—sort of acted as lady's maid on big occasions. Eleanor was a very pretty girl and Mrs. Osbourne sort of took a fancy to her. But the rest of us never got to know them at all.

DR. TEMPLETON. Then Thomas Osbourne at that time was the heir to the estate. Did he marry?

DAVID. No. There was some talk of a wedding at one time—his mother at last found someone she thought good enough for him—some rich New Yorker's daughter—but young Tom balked and stopped the arrangements.

DR. TEMPLETON. I presume he wanted to do his own choosing. I don't blame him.

DAVID. Oh, it raised a great row. His mother and him

thought a heap of each other, but they had a big fuss and parted in anger. Young Tom left home, and Mrs. Osbourne was ill for months afterwards.

DR. TEMPLETON. It must have been a great disappointment to her. Did she recover?

DAVID. Not altogether. After a time the doctor recommended a trip abroad. Of course, when he learned his mother was ill, young Tom came home, and soon as she was able to travel he took her to Europe. Well—that's the last we ever saw of them.

DR. TEMPLETON. Did they both die there?

DAVID. Yes. The son met with an accident while mountain climbing in Switzerland—fell from a cliff—and his body was never recovered.

DR. TEMPLETON. Never recovered? Why, that's remarkable.

DAVID. Yes—somethin' mysterious about it. Well, the shock killed the mother, and the property up on the hill went to another branch of the family—the Ryders.

DR. TEMPLETON. And for seventeen years no trace of Thomas Osbourne has been found?

DAVID. No. He's been long since given up as dead. I remember so well the summer he left here. It was the same year my sister Eleanor went away.

DR. TEMPLETON. [*Rising.*] That's a very interesting story, and I thank you for telling me. But I had forgotten. I was so wrapped up in my own affairs that the other matter had entirely escaped my mind. Mrs. Moore expressed a desire to see me today—I think it is in regard to your niece, Nellie.

DAVID. [*Goes c. to TEMPLETON.*] Now, don't take Susan serious when she begins to harp on Nell. She's just got into the habit of finding fault with the girl when there's really no occasion for it. The child is a little hoydenish, I admit—but she'll outgrow that. She has never had a mother to train her, and I don't think Susan goes about it in the right way.

DR. TEMPLETON. Her mother died when Nell was a baby, did she not?

DAVID. Yes. [*Pause.*] I wonder if you've heard any of Nell's history?

DR. TEMPLETON. Well, I did come across some story about her mother, but then one need not believe all one hears.

DAVID. I know what they say down in the village, but it ain't true. Eleanor did run away from home when she was a girl of eighteen—but no one knows with whom.

DR. TEMPLETON. I understood you to say it was the same year young Thomas Osbourne quarreled with his mother and left home?

DAVID. Yes.

DR. TEMPLETON. Did it ever occur to you they might have gone together?

DAVID. Lord, no. Why, they hardly knew each other.

DR. TEMPLETON. And you have never learned who it was your sister went away with?

DAVID. No. For two years we lost trace of her. One Christmas night she came back. It was snowing hard, and when we opened the door, she fell fainting across the floor. In her arms she carried Nellie, just a bit of a thing, half dead from exposure. Eleanor died a few days after that, without divulging the name of Nellie's father. She left no inheritance to her child but the gown she wore and a little chain and locket that was about her neck.

DR. TEMPLETON. Her wedding ring?

DAVID. She wore none. The little girl I have tried to raise as my own, but Susan has fought against it all these years, and now that both our girls are nearing womanhood, her hatred of Nell is almost inconceivable. Of course the townspeople have handed the story from one to another until it is pretty well known, and Susan feels the disgrace of it. But the child is innocent, and no matter what anyone says, I knew my sister Eleanor, and I'll swear she was a good woman.

DR. TEMPLETON. And so will I, Mr. Moore—though I only know her brother. [*Takes DAVID's hand.*]

DAVID. Thanks. Will you come in and see Susan?

DR. TEMPLETON. I wonder if she would come out here to me. I should like to hear her side of the story where I have listened to yours.

DAVID. Good. I'll send her to you. [*Exit into house R.*]

DR. TEMPLETON. The same old story since the world

began. Woman's trust—man's perfidy. Will the God who judges all things not see and understand?

[Enter SUSAN from house—comes down R. c.]

SUSAN. Ah, Dr. Templeton, David told me you were here. [*Shakes hands.*]

DR. TEMPLETON. I was glad to come, Mrs. Moore; if I can be of any service to you—you have but to name it.

SUSAN. Well, it's about that girl, Nellie.

DR. TEMPLETON. Your niece?

SUSAN. My husband's niece—not mine, thank Heaven. If I had had my way in the beginning, she should have been sent to an orphanage. But David wouldn't hear of it, and the consequence is, I've had to raise the girl in my own home and have her associate with my own children. Elizabeth—thank Heaven—is so far above her that her evil influence cannot touch her, but Jerry she has contaminated since the day she was able to speak.

DR. TEMPLETON. But what has she done?

SUSAN. Done? She does everything she shouldn't do. For half a day at a time I don't know where she is—or what she is doing. This morning after she finished the breakfast dishes, she disappeared, and no one has seen her since—and the house full of work to be done. Another thing, she is impudent, she is disobedient, she uses bad language; she is everything she shouldn't be—her mother was no good before her—she's sprung from a bad source—she's simply the dust of the earth.

DR. TEMPLETON. Are you sure she is *all* bad? Have you never tried to find any good in her?

SUSAN. There's no good there—what is the use of looking for it? Why, on Sundays I simply have to drive her to church, and did you notice her last Sunday during your sermon? She stared out of the window the whole blessed time.

DR. TEMPLETON. But she may have been listening, nevertheless.

SUSAN. She was not. When I got her home I told her about it; she said there was a bird singing out there that beat your sermon all to pieces. Then I asked her to tell

me what the sermon was about—what do you think she said?

DR. TEMPLETON. I'm sure I can't say.

SUSAN. She'd be doggoned if she knew. Now, what do you think of that?

DR. TEMPLETON. Very reprehensible indeed. But if I am not mistaken, there were other of my listeners who might have said the same thing had they been just as truthful. What do you want me to do in the matter?

SUSAN. I want you to find her a home away from here—she must leave my house—she torments my daughter and is ruining my son—and she's got to go.

DR. TEMPLETON. But don't you think your husband is the one to decide this for you?

SUSAN. No, David won't listen to it. But if *you* advise it, he might. There are lots of families who would take her in their kitchen. She can work when she wants to.

DR. TEMPLETON. But before going to this length, won't you try what kindness will do? All of us have a good and a bad side. Perhaps you have only succeeded in finding the bad. Now, look for the good and see what success you will have. Remember, she is a waif, thrown upon the mercy of others, without the protection of a father's name or the safeguard of a mother's love. Who knows but that all these years since she left her in your hands, that mother has been asking God's blessing—

SUSAN. Her mother!

DR. TEMPLETON. [*Raises his hand to silence her.*] Yes, we must not judge too harshly. She may have been more sinned against than sinning. No matter what else she was, she was a mother; and that is a great deal in God's eyes. I will wait and speak to Nellie—and together we will see what can be done to make her a better girl.

SUSAN. [*Disappointed.*] Well, of course, I suppose I needn't have expected a man to understand my side of it. Now a woman would. I expect I shall have to keep her here until she disgraces my home just as her mother did. [*Exit into house R.*]

DR. TEMPLETON. [*Goes to bench L. sits.*] Poor little motherless waif. What shall I say to her—how shall I reach her heart?

[NELLIE runs on from R. climbs over fence, she comes down stage quietly, looking toward house; when she gets almost within arm's length of TEMPLETON, she sees him, and makes a quick turn, going on tiptoes toward house. When she gets to porch, he looks up and calls her. She turns abruptly and laughs.]

DR. TEMPLETON. Nellie!

NELL. Hello, Minister—I didn't think you saw me.

DR. TEMPLETON. And so you were running away?

NELL. [*Coming toward him.*] Well, I know I'm in for one sermon from Aunt Sue, and I wasn't just hankerin' for another.

DR. TEMPLETON. Where have you been?

NELL. You won't tell Aunt Sue if I tell you, will you?

DR. TEMPLETON. I promise not to tell.

NELL. Well, I've been up in the hayloft.

DR. TEMPLETON. In the hayloft—what were you doing up there?

NELL. Readin'. [*Takes small book from apron pocket.*] See that—I read all that this morning. [*Opens book and indicates.*] If I can sneak off tomorrow mornin' the same way I reckon I can finish it, don't you?

DR. TEMPLETON. [*Looking at book.*] Alice in Wonderland. That's a very pretty story. Where did you get it?

NELL. From Mr. Ryder.

DR. TEMPLETON. John Ryder, of The Maples.

NELL. Yes. Oh, he's got loads of books in his library up at the big house; he says I can have any one I want.

DR. TEMPLETON. And do you always run away to the hayloft to read?

NELL. No. Mostly I go to Wandering Tom's cabin; it's nice and quiet there, and besides, he likes me to come.

DR. TEMPLETON. Wandering Tom. He's that pathetic old character that seems constantly searching for something. What is it he has lost?

NELL. Nobody knows. And he can't remember. Sometimes he looks at me so pitiful I almost want to cry. Where do you think I saw him yesterday?

DR. TEMPLETON. I don't know.

NELL. Up at the big house, looking through the windows.

DR. TEMPLETON. At The Maples?

NELL. Yes. I said, "What are you doing, Mr. Tom?" He said, "Why do they keep the place so dark; where are all the lights and music?" Now, wasn't that a funny thing to say?

DR. TEMPLETON. Yes. He is full of strange ideas. He seems to see things that we do not.

NELL. And sometimes he talks to himself, too. I heard him one day down by the river; he was walking up and down under the willows, and he kept saying to himself: "If I only could remember; if I only could remember." I think that's awful strange, don't you?

DR. TEMPLETON. Very strange indeed. There is some sad story in his life that he is trying to recall. I have heard of sudden loss of memory occasioned by an accident or a severe illness. That is probably what Wandering Tom is suffering from. Doesn't anyone know who he is?

NELL. No, not even old Mose who has lived with him and looked after him all these years.

DR. TEMPLETON. That's the old darkey?

NELL. A-hah. I mean, yes, sir—excuse me.

DR. TEMPLETON. And he has no friend but that old colored man?

NELL. Oh, yes, he's got me. I'm his friend, and he likes me, too.

DR. TEMPLETON. Yes, I fancy you could make anyone like you when you behave yourself.

NELL. [*Moving away.*] Well, I guess I got to go now.

DR. TEMPLETON. Oh, no, you don't. Come back here. I've got something more to say to you.

NELL. Gee—I thought I'd talked you out of it. Well, what's the complaint this time?

DR. TEMPLETON. Your aunt says that all during my sermon last Sunday you stared out of the window, and when you got home you didn't know one word I had said.

NELL. Yes, I did, too—every word of it.

DR. TEMPLETON. Then why did you stare out of the window while I was speaking?

NELL. I had to—to keep the tears from comin'. It was all about mothers—and love—and I sat there and thought

of my mother—and—oh, I wanted her—I wanted her.
[Cries.]

DR. TEMPLETON. [Softly.] Why didn't you tell your aunt this when she asked you?

NELL. Because she never believes me when I tell her the truth—and besides, she would have insulted my mother again—

DR. TEMPLETON. Insulted your mother?

NELL. Yes—she says she was no good—and that I'm just like her.

DR. TEMPLETON. Now, Nellie, I want you to promise that you will do your best to please Aunt Susan. Try to be more obedient—try not to be impertinent—in fact try all your might to be a very good girl.

NELL. Aunt Sue says there's no good in me; I never was any good, and I never will be any good. She says I'm goin' to hell anyway, so what's the use.

DR. TEMPLETON. And she tells me you don't say your prayers—you don't want to go to church—you never read the Bible—in fact, you don't care for anything that's religious.

NELL. Oh, yes, I do, too.

DR. TEMPLETON. Indeed—what is it?

NELL. I like ministers.

DR. TEMPLETON. [Laughs.] Bless my soul. Then there's some hope for you. Will you try to do what I advise, Nellie?

NELL. You won't scold or preach, will you?

DR. TEMPLETON. No, child, I am going to try what a little kindness will do.

[Enter ELIZABETH from house. Calls sharply.]

ELIZABETH. Nell! Mother wants you.

NELL. What for?

ELIZABETH. That's not for you to ask. [Comes down R. c.] I suppose Dr. Templeton can spare you long enough to find out.

NELL. [Crosses to house.] I guess I got to go, you'll tell me the rest some other time, won't you? [Exit.]

ELIZABETH. I didn't know that you and she were such good friends, Dr. Templeton.

DR. TEMPLETON. I have never felt otherwise than friendly toward the child.

ELIZABETH. Child? She's no child. She's within a year of my age—you don't call me a child, do you?

TEMPLETON. Decidedly not. And to prove it I am going to speak to you on a very important subject.

ELIZABETH. Important?

DR. TEMPLETON. Yes—to me. I am going to ask you to marry me, Elizabeth.

ELIZABETH. Dr. Templeton!

DR. TEMPLETON. Yes, I know I speak bluntly. I never could beat about the bush. Will you be just as frank, Elizabeth?

ELIZABETH. Well, I don't know—really—you've taken me by surprise.

DR. TEMPLETON. What do you think I've been coming here almost every day for?

ELIZABETH. I thought you were interested in our spiritual welfare.

DR. TEMPLETON. Well, perhaps I was—but I was more interested in you personally. The parsonage wants a mistress—will you come?

ELIZABETH. I'm afraid I am not ready to answer you, Dr. Templeton. I hadn't thought of you in that light before.

DR. TEMPLETON. Had you thought of any one else?

ELIZABETH. I know so few men.

DR. TEMPLETON. There's John Ryder. Does he come here to see you?

ELIZABETH. I don't think Mr. Ryder comes to see any one in particular.

DR. TEMPLETON. Then there's no serious obstacle to your considering my proposition?

ELIZABETH. No—but I can't decide so quickly. You must give me time.

DR. TEMPLETON. Of course—I didn't expect to propose one day and be married the next. But you won't keep me waiting long, will you, Elizabeth?

ELIZABETH. This is September. Give me until Christmas.

DR. TEMPLETON. Well, that's long enough, goodness knows. I haven't made love to you, dear; well, perhaps I don't know how; but I do care for you more than for anything else in the world. You will think of that between now and Christmas, won't you?

ELIZABETH. Yes.

DR. TEMPLETON. I want you to turn and look at me. [*He places hands on her shoulders and turns her to face him.*] They say a woman's eyes are more truthful than her tongue. Yours don't look very encouraging, Elizabeth.

ELIZABETH. [*Smiling.*] You must give them more time.

DR. TEMPLETON. And so I will. I shall wait patiently until Christmas for your answer and in the meantime pray that it will be favorable. May I see you again tomorrow?

ELIZABETH. Certainly—if you wish.

DR. TEMPLETON. Then I will leave you in peace for today. [*Raises her hand to his lips.*] Good-bye, Elizabeth.

ELIZABETH. Good-bye, Dr. Templeton. [TEMPLETON *exit c. going L.*] What made him think of John Ryder?

SUSAN. [*Enters from house—pauses on porch.*] Has Dr. Templeton gone?

ELIZABETH. Yes, mother; and what do you think has happened? I've had a proposal.

SUSAN. A proposal. Not Dr. Templeton?

ELIZABETH. Yes—who else?

SUSAN. [*Comes down and kisses ELIZABETH.*] My dear child, I congratulate you.

ELIZABETH. Not so quick—I haven't accepted him yet.

SUSAN. Not accepted him. Why, child, what are you thinking of? Of course, accept him. It's a splendid chance. Think of being mistress of that beautiful parsonage.

ELIZABETH. But suppose I could do better?

SUSAN. I don't understand.

ELIZABETH. What would you say to being mistress of The Maples?

SUSAN. The Maples—that is out of the question, child; you are mad to dream of such a thing.

ELIZABETH. You are blind, mother. What do you suppose John Ryder comes here so often for? To see you or

father—or to look at the crops? He is all alone up there [*Points L.*] except for the servants—the place wants a mistress, and he is not looking anywhere else for her.

SUSAN. Bless me, I never thought of it. Why, Elizabeth, it would be almost too good to be true. But what about Dr. Templeton?

ELIZABETH. I have held him off until Christmas. That will give John Ryder plenty of time—and I will see that he has the opportunities.

SUSAN. Elizabeth—you always were a clever girl. Why, I'd be so proud to see you mistress of that beautiful old place—I wouldn't know what to do.

ELIZABETH. It won't be my fault if I'm not.

SUSAN. I declare, I'm so flustrated at the thought of it. Elizabeth, if he comes here this morning try to make him stay to dinner. I'll go in and prepare something nice.

[*Goes quickly into house.*]

ELIZABETH. [*On porch, about to enter house.*] Mistress of The Maples. If it would only come true.

[*Enter MOSE and WANDERING TOM, from L. Enter at gate, but remain up stage.*]

MOSE. [*Calls as ELIZABETH is about to enter house.*] Missy!

[*ELIZABETH turns and sees them; she looks at them with dislike.*]

ELIZABETH. Well, what do you want?

MOSE. If yo' please, Miss—Mr. Tom here—he wants to see the little lady—Missy Nell.

ELIZABETH. Little lady indeed. That's rich. [*Laughs.*] And so you are her friends, are you—an imbecile and a nigger.

MOSE. Yes, missy—I'm a nigger—but I can't help dat—God made me a nigger, just like he make some people heartless. And dis yer am Mr. Tom. He ain't no im-be-cile; no mam, he's jist wanderin' in his head a little—but he's got a good heart—and he's a genlum—Mr. Tom is—he's a genlum—yes, mam.

ELIZABETH. And so you want to see Nell, do you?

MOSE. Y-yes, mam. Mr. Tom—he ain't feelin' so well today—and he just got a longin' to see dat chile; she didn't come to the cabin this mornin', and he didn't give me no rest till I bring him yer.

ELIZABETH. So there's where she spends her time, is it—associating with you two old tramps. Well, I'll tell mother, and she'll soon put a stop to it.

TOM. Miss—I don't understand all you say—but I think your intention is to insult us. I may be an old tramp now, but I was once a gentleman. I have had a great loss—I can't remember what it is—but some day it will all come back to me; I know it—I feel it; and the little girl helps me somehow—she helps me to remember. Sometimes I think it will be through her that I will regain what I have lost.

MOSE. Yes'm—dat's a fact—he always do say dat—so won't you please be so kind and let him see her.

ELIZABETH. Certainly not—and what is more—don't you two ever dare come here again. The idea. It's bad enough to have to put up with her—let alone her friends. Now, you two go.

MOSE. [*Pauses—then quietly turns to Mr. Tom.*] Yes, mam. I'm very sorry we done intrude. I hopes you'll excuse us. Come, Master Tom—we can't see Missy Nell today—de lady say we got to go.

TOM. I thank you, madame, for your courtesy. Good-day. [*Makes an old-fashioned bow, and turns with Mose toward the gate. They are both old and slow in movement. As they reach gate, NELL enters from behind house R.*]

NELL. Mr. Tom—Mose—where are you going?

MOSE. [*Turns at NELL's voice.*] We goin' back home, Missy; dis lady say so.

NELL. [*Turns toward ELIZABETH, who is on porch.*] You didn't dare drive them away?

ELIZABETH. Dare? Who are you talking to? Of course I drove them away. The disreputable looking beggars.

NELL. [*Turns to TOM and MOSE.*] Oh, Mr. Tom—I'm so sorry—please don't mind her—she don't know any better. [*To ELIZABETH.*] They're not beggars; they haven't asked you for anything, have they?

MOSE. No'm—I specks we wouldn't get it nohow.

ELIZABETH. If they are not beggars—what are they?

NELL. They are my friends; that's what they are.

[NELL is c.]

ELIZABETH. [*Comes down facing NELL.*] Well, your friends are no more welcome here than you are; and if any more of your friends call I'll have them put off the place, do you understand?

[JOHN RYDER *enters at gate to hear the last part of ELIZABETH'S speech.*]

RYDER. Oh, I'm sorry to hear that, Miss Elizabeth; because I am a friend of Nell. [*Takes NELL'S hand.*]

ELIZABETH. [*Startled.*] Mr. Ryder. [*Turns toward house R.*]

MOSE. Please 'scuse us, Missy—we don't want to cause no trouble—I reckon me and Master Tom just trot along home, yes'm. [*Start off through gate going L.*]

NELL. Wait, Mose—I'll go as far as the cabin with you.

[*Starts to follow them.*]

RYDER. And I'll go too, Nell.

NELL. Oh, will you? Then I reckon I'd better take off this old apron. [*Unfastens apron and throws it over bench L.*]

RYDER. In my honor? Why—I'm flattered.

NELL. Oh, I couldn't take a stroll with a fine gentleman like you wearing a thing like that.

[*They start off, hand in hand, laughing and chatting happily.*]

[*ELIZABETH has stood quietly by in an angry mood. After they go off, she goes up stage and looks after them.*]

ELIZABETH. He never even looked at me. It's that worthless girl he comes to see. I'll not stand for it—if she stays in this house, I won't. [*Goes to house, calls.*] Mother; come here, I want you. [*Goes up stage and looks off L.*]

[*Enter SUSAN quickly from house.*]

SUSAN. What is it, Elizabeth?

ELIZABETH. Come here—I want to show you something.

[SUSAN joins her up stage.] Look there. [Points off L.]

SUSAN. Why—who is it—Nell—and who's that with her?

ELIZABETH. John Ryder.

SUSAN. Mr. Ryder?

ELIZABETH. Yes—she took him off with her before my very eyes. I'm tired of her forever standing in my way. You've got to do something to get rid of her—or I leave this house.

SUSAN. My dear child—what more can I do? I've tried to send her away—but your father won't hear of it.

ELIZABETH. [Looks at apron—an idea comes to her.] If I find a way, will you help me?

SUSAN. Of course I will; but what will you do?

ELIZABETH. Leave that to me. Where is father?

SUSAN. In his room.

ELIZABETH. In ten minutes I will go to him and make a charge against her. No matter what I say, bear me out in it.

SUSAN. But what charge will you make?

ELIZABETH. Wait. [Looks quickly to see that no one is about. Then takes off her ring, draws her mother's attention to it, goes over to bench and slips the ring into pocket of NELL's apron.] You see?

SUSAN. I understand. [Exit into house.]

ELIZABETH. [About to enter house—pauses.] Father hates a thief. [Exit into house.]

[Enter JERRY from R. comes through gate c.]

JERRY. Doggone it—somebody must have gone and told them fish I was comin'—'cause dey had all gone visiting somewheres else. If Ma sees dis fishin' rod—she'll give me hallelujah—but she ain't goin' to see it. [Places it behind house. Turns to look off L.] Gee—yer comes Miss Arabella—I bet she's so full of news she's ready to bust. [Enter ARABELLA from L. through gate. Very excited.]

ARABELLA. Jerry—where's your mother?

JERRY. In the house—walk right in.

ARABELLA. I ain't got time. Go find her quick—I've got the biggest piece of news!

JERRY. Tell me—I'll give it to her.

ARABELLA. Tell you indeed—after almost walkin' my legs off to tell her myself. Besides, it's not for your ears to hear.

JERRY. See here—you ain't come yer complainin' on me, are you?

ARABELLA. Boy, I've been dispensing news for the last twenty years, and I ain't never been fool enough yet to complain to a mother about her only son. [JERRY *exit into house.*] They say I'm a walkin' newspaper. Well, I'd like to know how folks is goin' to find out what's goin' on in their midst if it wasn't for me. I've got no patience with them women as is content to sit at home and mind their own business, and never take an interest in their neighbors' affairs; land sakes, I'd just as soon be dead.

SUSAN. [*At door.*] Well, Arabella, what's the trouble?

ARABELLA. No trouble at all—unless you call twins trouble—Mrs. Hammond has got twins. Ain't it awful, Susan?

SUSAN. What—two?

ARABELLA. Now, Susan Moore, one would think you had better sense than to make a remark like that. You ought to know by this time that twins—like misfortunes—never come one at a time.

SUSAN. Where have you been keeping yourself, Arabella? I haven't seen you since the church strawberry festival.

ARABELLA. Land sakes—how about that fesitval. Did you ever see such a messy affair in all your born days. Well, sir, when I walks into that supper room and saw Amy Lee Smithkins presiding at that table, I says to myself, Arabella, I says, this is no place for you, and out I goes. I steps over to Mrs. Thomas's and visited with her about two hours. You know she's paralyzed and couldn't go to the strawberry festival. I told her I thought she was lucky. Do you know, Susan, I never knew a woman to get so much pleasure out of paralysis as she does.

SUSAN. Pleasure?

ARABELLA. I mean talkin' about it. Every time you see her she begins at the beginning and explains and describes every symptom, pain and ache she's had for the last twenty

years. I give you my word, she's the only woman in this neighborhood that can beat me talkin'.

SUSAN. I'm baking, Arabella; won't you come back in the kitchen?

ARABELLA. No, thank you; I just stopped in to give you the news. I must hurry on to Mrs. Green's. You know she hasn't heard about Mrs. Hammond and I don't want anybody to get there before I do. Good-bye until I see you again. [*Exit L.*]

SUSAN. Good-bye, Arabella. [*Enters house.*]

[*Enter RYDER and NELL L.*]

RYDER. [*Looks after ARABELLA.*] Who is that fussy little person?

NELL. [*Picks up apron and begins to put it on.*] Miss Arabella is her name, but they call her lots of other things; the village newspaper, and bureau of information, and things like that.

RYDER. Let me fasten that for you. [*Fastens top button of apron.*] And so you liked Alice in Wonderland?

NELL. Oh, yes, but I haven't quite finished it. You don't want it back yet, do you?

RYDER. Dear, no; keep it as long as you like. But I've brought you another book today. [*Takes book from pocket.*]

NELL. Oh, have you; I'm so glad; what's it about?

RYDER. It's a love story. [*Puts his hands on her shoulders, looks into her face.*] Do you know what that is?

NELL. Well, I ain't quite sure.

RYDER. You will some day; and I hope yours, when it comes, will be as interesting and as beautiful as this is.

[*Gives her book.*]

NELL. [*Glances through book.*] Oh, I know I'm going to like it.

[*Enter JERRY from house.*]

JERRY. Hello, people.

NELL. Oh, Jerry, did you catch anything?

JERRY. Naw, them fish were too wise for me.

RYDER. [*Laughing.*] I'm afraid you're not a good fisherman, Jerry.

JERRY. [JERRY is C. RYDER on R. and NELL on L.] Well, sir, the other day I sat under a tree on the bank of that stream for about two hours—and didn't get a bite. Then all of a sudden I felt something tugging at the line and I hauls her up, and I'll be cornswabbed if there wasn't a fish on the hook about so long—[*Stretches his arms far as possible—looks at RYDER and NELL to see if they believe him—sees that they do not*]*—well, he was about six inches anyway. I puts the line in again and first thing you know I gets another bite, and that thing kept up until I had about fifty fishes on my line; I was just thinkin' about goin' home—when I felt the line pull away from me, and would you believe it, I followed that line downstream for about sixteen yards—a-pullin' and a-pullin'; thinks I to myself, there's a five-pounder on there, sure as you're born—just think what the folks are goin' to say when they see it—and then—dog-gone it—what do you think happened?*

RYDER AND NELL. What?

JERRY. I fell in the darn stream and woke up.

[*They are laughing at him, when DAVID enters from house. He comes c., his manner very stern. SUSAN enters and remains on porch. ELIZABETH stands R. near house.*]

DAVID. Nellie, come here.

NELL. [*Goes to DAVID.*] What is it, Uncle Dave?

DAVID. Do you remember the ring that I gave Elizabeth on her last birthday?

NELL. Yes, sir.

DAVID. Well, it has been taken from her room and she says you were the only one that went in there today.

NELL. Yes, she sent me there to sweep.

DAVID. Did you see anything of her ring?

NELL. Why, no, Uncle Dave; she never kept it in her room; she always wore it. I saw it on her hand this morning.

ELIZABETH. You see, mother, how she lies.

SUSAN. Of course she does. No matter what she says—I'll not harbor a thief in my house another day.

NELL. A thief! Oh, no, Aunt Sue—you don't mean it.

RYDER. Oh, Mrs. Moore—I think there must be some mistake; you are not accusing Nellie?

SUSAN. Yes, I am; she has fooled you, Mr. Ryder, just as she has the rest of us. The girl is no good.

DAVID. The question is, did Nellie steal the ring?

NELL. Oh, no, Uncle Dave; how can you think it?

SUSAN. Mr. Ryder, will you be good enough to search her pockets?

RYDER. No, madam, I will not.

SUSAN. Then I will. [*Goes quickly to NELL, takes ring from her apron pocket, hands it to DAVID, and returns R.*] There's the proof—the girl's a thief!

NELL. Oh, no, no, Uncle Dave; you don't believe it; I didn't take the ring; you don't believe me a thief—Uncle Dave—you don't believe it—you don't believe it—[*Crying, kneels at his feet, holding his hand.*]

DAVID. [*Looks undecidedly at others, then at NELL sobbing. Raises his head convinced.*] No, by God, I don't.

CURTAIN

ACT THE SECOND

Interior of Maple Farm Cottage. Christmas Day. Door R. flat. Large window, showing snow falling, and winter landscape. Door L. 2 E. with few steps leading up to it, as if it led upstairs. Table in L. U. corner containing Christmas tree, trimmed. On the table are numerous articles (Christmas presents). On the floor near the tree there is a tool-chest with a card on it. A snow shovel and a pair of boots, a book and a pair of roller skates. Each article has a card attached. A table with lamp, R. Couple of chairs. A hat tree inside door in flat.

At rise of curtain, sleighbells heard, as if sleigh were drawing up at door. Talk outside, the bells cease.

[*Enter DAVID followed by DR. TEMPLETON, wearing heavy coats, etc. Business of shaking snow off.*]

DAVID. I tell you—this is Christmas weather all right, Gee willikens!

DR. TEMPLETON. It is indeed. If it keeps on at this rate, I'm afraid we sha'n't be able to return tonight.

DAVID. Well, in that case, we'll stay over until morning. Now, I'll just explain to Susan, and then we'll start right off. I wonder where they all are. [*Goes to door L. Calls.*] Susan—Elizabeth—where is everybody? [*Returns R. C.*]

[*Enter SUSAN L.*]

SUSAN. Well, David Moore—if that ain't just like you—tracking snow all over the carpet. How do you do, Dr. Templeton—ain't this glorious Christmas weather?

DR. TEMPLETON. Splendid, Mrs. Moore—I always think Christmas doesn't seem just right without a snow-storm. Mother Goose is plucking her geese, as the children say.

DAVID. Susan, the minister and I have got to go over to Rose Hill right away.

SUSAN. Mercy on us—David—why, that's quite a drive.

DAVID. I know it is—we ain't goin' for pleasure. You see, old Joe Holmes is took worse, and they don't expect him to live many hours. Naturally he wants to see the minister, and as Joe has been a good friend of mine since I was knee-high to a grasshopper, I ain't goin' to let him die there all alone.

DR. TEMPLETON. Besides, I don't know just how I could get there this evening if Mr. Moore had not offered to drive me over; there's no train going that way until midnight.

DAVID. Yes, and poor old Joe is failing fast. So we won't waste no more time here. We may have to stay all night, Susan, so don't git worried if you don't see me till morning.

SUSAN. Good gracious—it does seem too bad to have you go off like this. Some people do have the queerest ideas; now, what made old Joe Holmes select Christmas day to die on?

DAVID. Well, I reckon he would have postponed it if he could; but that's one of the things we ain't consulted about. Come along, Minister, I reckon it'll be dark before we get there. [*DAVID and TEMPLETON turn toward door.*]

[*Enter ELIZABETH L. 2 E.*]

ELIZABETH. Are you going out, father?

DAVID. Yes; mother'll explain. The minister is going with me.

ELIZABETH. [*Goes c.*] [*To TEMPLETON.*] I'm sorry.

DR. TEMPLETON. [*Takes her hand.*] I'm more than sorry, Elizabeth. I had expected to remind you of a promise today—but I shall have to wait until tomorrow. You will be ready to answer me tomorrow?

ELIZABETH. Yes.

DR. TEMPLETON. Then good-bye. [*Starts off.*]

DAVID. Good-bye. [*Exit, door R. in flat.*]

SUSAN. Good-bye. Take care of yourselves.

[*DAVID and TEMPLETON exeunt. SUSAN stands at door.*]

ELIZABETH runs to window. *Jingle of sleighbells outside, voices speaking to horses, etc.*
Bells die off in distance.]

SUSAN. [*As sleigh starts off.*] Jerry, Jerry. Just look at that boy throwing snowballs after them—there, he has hit the minister in the neck with one. Jerry, you come in here, you young rascal.

ELIZABETH. [*Shivering.*] Oh, mother, close the door; you'll have the place like an iceberg.

SUSAN. [*Closes door.*] It's too bad the minister had to go.

ELIZABETH. I'm glad of it. It has given me another day.

SUSAN. You had better put John Ryder out of your mind, Elizabeth, and accept the minister.

ELIZABETH. I have until tomorrow. John Ryder comes today.

[*Enter JERRY, wrapped up in mufflers, etc.*]

JERRY. Gee—did ye see me soak the minister? I bet that'll hold him for a while.

SUSAN. Ain't you got no more respect for a minister of the church?

JERRY. Ah, shucks—ain't he goin' to be my brother-in-law? I was just initiatin' him into the family—that's all. If he marries Sis, he'll have to get used to gettin' it in the neck.

ELIZABETH. You had better wait until he is your brother-in-law; you are entirely too sure of that fact.

JERRY. Remember, Sis, a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush. Not that I mean to say the minister is a bird—far be it from me.

ELIZABETH. Indeed; then what do you mean?

JERRY. I mean that you're wastin' valuable time waiting for John Ryder to come your way, 'cause if I knows anything about love—and I think I do—John Ryder's heart is gone in another direction.

ELIZABETH. [*Angrily.*] Oh, indeed; is that so; you impudent thing. Mother, will you allow that boy to talk to me in that way?

SUSAN. I declare; you two can never spend five minutes in the same room without fussing. Jerry, ain't you ashamed of yourself?

JERRY. No'm. Sis ought to be; she's got such a mean disposition.

[JERRY *is* L. C. ELIZABETH R. C. SUSAN *up stage* c.]

ELIZABETH. Mean disposition. You take that back.

[*Starts for* JERRY.]

SUSAN. [*Comes between them.*] Now, daughter; remember you are a lady.

JERRY. Yes—and please don't overlook the fact that I am a gentleman.

ELIZABETH. Gentleman! You never will be if you live a hundred years.

JERRY. Well, if it takes that long to be a gentleman, I ain't goin' to try.

SUSAN. Now, Elizabeth, don't you see he's only trying to tease you. What's the use of getting yourself all flurried up for nothing, and company liable to drop in at any minute? Come back in the kitchen; I want you to test the blackberry wine to see if it is fit to serve.

ELIZABETH. [*Follows* SUSAN *to door* R. U.] Jerry, if anybody comes, you call us immediately, do you hear?

[SUSAN and ELIZABETH *exit* R. U.]

JERRY. Anybody means Mr. Ryder. Gee, ain't sisters queer things. [*Takes a cigarette from his pocket. He is L. C.*]

[*NELL enters door in flat, hangs her cloak on hat tree inside door. Comes down behind JERRY. JERRY stands contemplating the cigarette.*]

NELL. [*Behind JERRY.*] Boo! [*JERRY jumps. NELL laughs.*] Where's Aunt Sue?

JERRY. In the kitchen.

NELL. Did she know I was out?

JERRY. You bet she did; where have you been?

NELL. Down to Mr. Tom's cabin. [*Sits on table R.*] Jerry, I'm a liar.

JERRY. What?

NELL. Ah-ha; I took some turkey to Mr. Tom and Mose, and I told them Aunt Sue sent it.

JERRY. Gee—did they believe you?

NELL. I think Mr. Tom did—but Mose looked at me kind of funny. I ain't sure but what I'm a thief, too.

JERRY. Why?

NELL. I hooked the turkey. I didn't exactly hook it; I just took it out of the ice-box. You see, I didn't eat any at dinner, so I took as much as I thought would have been my part—and a little bit more—and then some—do you think that's stealing?

JERRY. No, you won't go to the bad place for that. And didn't you eat any dinner?

NELL. No. I didn't want any. You see, the turkey Aunt Sue killed for dinner was a friend of mine.

JERRY. A friend of yours?

NELL. Yes, I had been feeding him every day for a long time—and we kinda got to like each other; and when I saw Aunt Sue set him on the table, all brown and roasted—I said, Poor old Bob—and that settled me for dinner.

JERRY. So you took him to Mr. Tom and Mose?

NELL. Yes. Do you know—I believe they hadn't a thing in the house to eat.

JERRY. Gee-whiz; why didn't you tell me; I'd have saved my part of Bob, too. [*Is about to light cigarette.*]

NELL. What's that?

JERRY. S-s-sh. [*Glances around.*] It's a cigarmaroot.

NELL. O—oh—better not let Aunt Sue see it. She'll cigarmaroot you. Lemme see you smoke.

JERRY. [*Lights cigarette, gives a few awkward puffs at it.*] Want to try?

NELL. [*Eagerly.*] Might make me sick.

JERRY. No, it won't—didn't make me sick.

NELL. How do you do it?

JERRY. Just puff—like that. [*Shows how. He holds cigarette for her.*]

NELL. [*Takes a puff—then coughs.*] Uh—ain't it nasty.

[*Enter ARABELLA door in flat.*]

ARABELLA. Jerry! [*JERRY and NELL jump. JERRY tries to hide cigarette, puts it in his pants pocket—it slips down—he tries to find it.*]

ARABELLA. Where's your mother?

JERRY. Gee—you ain't circulatin' today, are you—don't you know this is a holiday?

NELL. All papers have a Christmas edition—I reckon this is an extra. [*NELL and JERRY laugh.*]

ARABELLA. You two think you are awful smart, don't you? Well, you'll laugh on the other side of your face presently. [*To NELL.*] I'll cook your goose, miss.

NELL. Thanks; we had a turkey, and it's already cooked.

ARABELLA. You impertinent piece; what I've got to say concerns you.

NELL. I ain't surprised. If the good Lord sent one of His angels down here, you'd have some fault to find with it.

JERRY. She wouldn't like the color of its wings.

[*JERRY remains L. NELL R. at table. ARABELLA C. up stage.*]

ARABELLA. Will you call your mother?

JERRY. No, do it yourself.

[*Enter SUSAN, remains at door R. U.*]

SUSAN. Oh, Arabella; I thought I heard your voice. Won't you sit down and have some refreshments?

ARABELLA. No, thanks; I just stopped in to wish you a merry Christmas.

JERRY. [*Aside.*] And raise merry—well, it's no use saying it.

ARABELLA. And while I'm here I feel it my duty to speak about another matter. You know, Susan, as well as I do, that I ain't one to spy on people and try to find out what they're doin'; but things have accidentally come under my notice that I think you ought to know about. [*Shakes her finger at NELL.*] Do you know that that girl goes alone and unprotected to a lonely cabin on the other side of Mason's woods?

SUSAN. No, I didn't. How do you know, Arabella?

ARABELLA. I thought you didn't know about it. I saw her coming from there a little while ago; and I says to myself, I says, Susan Moore has got to know about this.

SUSAN. [*To NELL.*] What have you got to say, Miss?

NELL. Got nothin' to say. That's Mr. Tom's cabin, and I do go there; what's the harm in it; there's no one there but a sick old man and a darkey.

ARABELLA. Don't you believe her; do you want to tell me that a girl walks half a mile through the snow to see an old man and a darkey. I reckon I know better than that. I was once a girl myself.

NELL. No one would ever believe it.

ARABELLA. You take my word for it, Susan; she's had a rendez-vous there this morning.

SUSAN. I'll attend to her, Arabella. I wouldn't be a bit surprised if what you say is true. Come back in the kitchen and have a glass of homemade blackberry before you go.

ARABELLA. Well, I don't care if I do. [*Goes to door R. U.*] But if that boy was mine I'd never let him associate with her. [*SUSAN and ARABELLA exeunt R. U.*]

JERRY. [*Goes to R. U.*] Say, if you was a man I'd take you out and wash your face in the snow. I'm going to soak you wid a snowball anyhow, when you go—just for luck. [*Comes down to NELL, who is leaning downcast against table.*] Say, Nell, what's a ren-dez-vous?

NELL. Search me. She said I had one this morning. It's funny I don't know what it is.

JERRY. Say, what did you get for Christmas?

NELL. Nothin'.

JERRY. Well, Christmas ain't over yet. What would you like to have?

NELL. Oh, what's the use of liking.

JERRY. I heard you ask Sis for a piece of blue ribbon the other day; what did you want it for?

NELL. I wanted it to wear, of course. I found a dress in the attic that Lizzie threw away; I heard her tell Aunt Sue she wouldn't wear it any more; so I took it and fixed it up; and I wanted the ribbon for that.

JERRY. And she wouldn't give it to you?

NELL. She wouldn't even lend it to me. I only wanted it to wear this evening.

JERRY. What do you want it this evening for?

NELL. Oh, nothing particular.

JERRY. John Ryder comin' over?

NELL. [*Sharply.*] I'd like to know what that has got to do with it?

JERRY. Oh, nothin' particular. [*JERRY takes from his pocket a bunch of blue ribbon. Gives it to NELL.*] There's your ribbon.

NELL. Oh, Jerry, where did you get it?

JERRY. Bought it. Dad gave me a whole dollar yesterday, and that's the first thing I bought.

NELL. And you give it to me?

JERRY. Of course.

NELL. [*Hugs him impulsively.*] Oh, Jerry, I'm so glad.

JERRY. Wait a minute; maybe I got another piece.

NELL. And it's all my own, ain't it; just think, I won't have to give it back to anybody; I can keep it, can't I?

JERRY. Sure it's yours; what are you talkin' about?

NELL. Because I have so few things that really belong to me. Only my mother's dress, this little locket with her picture in it. [*Slips locket on small chain from under her apron collar.*] And now this bunch of ribbon. That's all I got in the world, Jerry; and you don't know how much they mean to me.

JERRY. Lemme see the picture; why do you always keep it hidden?

NELL. [*Holds locket so that JERRY might see the picture in it.*] Because nobody loves her but me.

JERRY. [*Looking at the locket.*] Gee, she looks a heap like you. And that's the dress you've got up in the attic, ain't it? [*Pointing to picture.*]

NELL. Yes, sometimes I put it on, put my hair up like that, and then I look in the glass and make believe it's my mother looking back at me.

JERRY. Say, you're a funny kid. Better not let Ma catch you at that. She'll take them away from you.

NELL. She can't; they're mine; my mother left them to me when she died; I'll never give them up to anybody. [*Replaces locket around her neck.*] Jerry, I wish I had something to give you.

JERRY. Don't worry about that. Come here, let me show you what I got. [*Indicates each article as he speaks of them.*] There's a tool-chest from Ma. [*Reads card.*] "To my darling boy, Merry Christmas." That means her darling boy will have to do all the carpenter work about the house for the next year. Here's a snow shovel and a pair of boots from Pa. [*Reads card.*] "Merry Christmas to Jerry." Yes, Merry Christmas, shoveling snow from now until April. Here's a book from Sis: "A girl's best friend is her sweetheart," by Laura Jean Libbey.

NELL. That's a funny book for you to read.

JERRY. She didn't expect me to read it. She wanted it herself and she knew I'd give it back to her. And here's roller skates from the minister. Roller skates in the country and in the winter time. I wanted ice skates; I can't skate on these things.

NELL. Put them on and try. I'll hold your hand.

JERRY. Wait a minute. [*Sits on floor.*] Here goes. Gee, I hope Miss Arabella will keep Ma in the kitchen a little longer.

NELL. [*Helping JERRY fasten the skates.*] Oh, she ain't half through yet. When she starts she never stops until she has talked about everybody she knows. Let me help you with this one.

JERRY. They're on. Hold my hand.

[*Business of skating about the room. NELL holds JERRY's hand until they reach R. U. E. ARABELLA enters, still chatting to SUSAN, who is following her. JERRY bumps into ARABELLA, and they both tumble.*

NELL runs L.]

SUSAN. Jerry—what do you mean?

JERRY. [*Rising.*] Well, why didn't she look where she was going?

ARABELLA. [*Rising.*] You ill-mannered boy; I never had such a shock in my life. Susan, I don't like to talk to a woman about her only son, but that boy is awful.

SUSAN. You can't blame my boy, Arabella; it's the influence of that worthless girl. [*To NELL.*] Leave the room, Miss; I'll attend to you later. [*NELL exit L. 2 E.*] Jerry, take those skates back in the kitchen. [*JERRY goes to R. U. E.*] Before you go, tell Miss Arabella you're sorry.

JERRY. I'll be hanged if I do. I'd like to get another chance at her—that's all. Look out.

[*JERRY makes a sudden turn as if slipping. ARABELLA gets behind SUSAN. JERRY exit R. U.*]

SUSAN. I never saw Jerry carry on so before.

[*Enter ELIZABETH R. U.*]

ARABELLA. Susan Moore, you take my advice and keep your eye on that girl; you know what her mother was; and she's just like her; I declare I never saw such a spittin' image of Eleanor Moore in my life. Well, good-bye, I must be going. [*ARABELLA makes a start for door in flat, turns back.*] Oh, I almost forgot something. Is it true that the minister and John Ryder come here almost every day?

ELIZABETH. The minister comes to see us as he does everyone else who belongs to his church; and Mr. Ryder owns this farm, it is part of The Maples estate; I suppose he can come here as often as he likes.

ARABELLA. Now, Elizabeth, there's no use gettin' ruffled at a civil question. You know I always took an interest in you; and folks down in the village are kind of mystified; they'd like to know who it is going to be, the minister or Mr. Ryder.

ELIZABETH. Well, they won't be any the wiser after they've seen you.

ARABELLA. Oh, I see; it ain't quite settled yet. Well, no harm meant. I only wanted to be the first to offer congrats; that's all. Good-bye, Susan; I've enjoyed myself so much. [*Exit c.*]

ELIZABETH. The old busybody.

SUSAN. Well, you see, folks are talkin'. If John Ryder doesn't speak today, you had better accept the minister to-morrow.

ELIZABETH. If you would keep Nell out of his way perhaps he would get a chance to speak. Every time he comes here that girl manages to attract his attention.

SUSAN. Oh, you needn't worry about her. I've made it my business to tell him her mother's history, in case he hadn't heard it.

ELIZABETH. What did he say?

SUSAN. Didn't say anything, but he thought a heap. He just looked at me kind of wise and smiled. Why, you don't think a man in John Ryder's position is going to consider a girl like Nell, do you?

ELIZABETH. I don't know. You never can tell what a man is going to do—where a girl is concerned.

[*Enter JOHN RYDER, c. Carries a few packages. Puts his hat on rack inside door.*]

RYDER. [*Speaks as he opens door.*] May I come in?

SUSAN. Oh, it's Mr. Ryder.

RYDER. [*Puts packages on table, shakes hands with SUSAN.*] I wish you a merry Christmas, Mrs. Moore, although the day is almost over. [*Shakes hands with ELIZABETH.*] And to you, Miss Elizabeth, if you will accept my good wishes at this late hour.

ELIZABETH. We are always glad to have you, Mr. Ryder. Mother was wondering if you'd drop in today.

RYDER. I really intended coming earlier, but I went down into the village to take some toys to my housekeeper's grandchildren, and a few other little friends I have down there, and I could hardly get away from them.

SUSAN. You are fond of children?

RYDER. Yes, God bless 'em; I never met a child yet that I couldn't love. Where is Mr. Moore?

ELIZABETH. Father and Dr. Templeton have gone some distance to see a friend who is dying. They probably won't return tonight.

RYDER. Oh, I'm sorry. I've brought him a meerschaum pipe as a little Christmas remembrance; I know he smokes.

[*Gives pipe in case to SUSAN.*]

SUSAN. [*Opens case.*] Oh, Mr. Ryder, how thoughtful you are. Ain't it beautiful, Elizabeth?

ELIZABETH. Lovely; father will be awfully pleased.

RYDER. And for Mrs. Moore I've brought a real Cashmere shawl; I picked it up in Egypt while I was abroad last year, so I believe it is the real article and not an imitation. [*Gives SUSAN box containing folded shawl.*]

SUSAN. Oh, what a beautiful pattern; and to think it came all the way from Egypt.

ELIZABETH. Mother will be so proud she won't know her old friends.

RYDER. And for Miss Elizabeth there is an odd little Russian purse. [*Gives it to her.*] I hope it will always be well filled.

ELIZABETH. [*Admiring purse.*] Oh, how beautiful. Did this come from abroad, too?

RYDER. Yes, St. Petersburg.

SUSAN. Really, Mr. Ryder, you've been too kind.

ELIZABETH. Yes, we don't know how to thank you.

RYDER. Then please don't try. Oh, by the way, where is Jerry? I'd like to see him.

SUSAN. I sent him to the kitchen a few minutes ago; I'll go tell him. [*Exit R. U.*]

RYDER. [*Glancing around.*] Where is your cousin, Miss Elizabeth?

ELIZABETH. My cousin?

RYDER. Yes—Nellie.

ELIZABETH. Oh, we don't call her cousin, Mr. Ryder. I thought you knew that.

RYDER. She is your father's sister's child, is she not?

ELIZABETH. Yes, unfortunately. I don't care to go into the story, but our family have suffered a great deal at her

mother's hands, and we can't bring ourselves to recognize this girl as a cousin; it would be expecting too much.

SUSAN. [*Enters R. U.*] I think Jerry must have gone down to the barn; he'll be here in a minute.

RYDER. Oh, in that case, I'll go find him. I'll return shortly. [*Exit C.*]

SUSAN. Well, did he speak?

ELIZABETH. Yes, of her; he wants to see her.

SUSAN. Well, he sha'n't. She's up in the attic now, and I'll see that she stays there.

[*NELL enters L. 2 E.—remains on steps; she has changed her gingham dress for a simple white dress, and wears the blue ribbons.*]

ELIZABETH. Oh, will you? Then look at that. [*Points to NELL.*] And she's wearing my dress. [*Crosses and takes fold of dress in her hand.*] Mother, just look at that; the impudence of her, wearing my clothes.

NELL. It's an old dress that you threw away; you said you wouldn't wear it again, Lizzie.

ELIZABETH. I said nothing of the sort; and how many times have I told you not to call me Lizzie; my name is Elizabeth.

NELL. I always called you that when we were children.

ELIZABETH. We are not children now. I am a lady, no matter what you are.

SUSAN. You march right upstairs and take that dress off; you hear me speaking? How dare you take my child's clothes?

ELIZABETH. And that's my ribbon, too.

NELL. It is not. Jerry gave it to me. You can have your old dress, I might have known you'd be too mean to let me keep it. But you sha'n't have the ribbon; that's my own, and I'd like to see you try to take it. You won't give me anything nice to wear.

SUSAN. Indeed, and why should I? You ought to be thankful to have a roof over your head. Go back and put on your gingham dress.

NELL. I won't; I'm tired of wearing that old rag. I know what I'll do, I'll put on the dress my mother gave me; that's mine and you can't take it away from me.

ELIZABETH. Yes, do; you'll be a picture in that old-fashioned thing; but you won't wear my clothes, understand that.

SUSAN. [*Draws ELIZABETH to R. of stage.*] That will do, Elizabeth. [*To NELL.*] You go upstairs, Miss, and don't you show your face until I send for you.

NELL. Aunt Sue, please let me stay.

SUSAN. Don't talk back to me. Do as I tell you.

[*NELL turns slowly toward L. 2 E., is on the step, when RYDER comes quickly through c. door.*]

RYDER. I found him. [*Sees NELL.*] Oh; wait a minute, Nellie, don't go. [*Crosses and takes her hand.*]

SUSAN. [*At R. U. E. with ELIZABETH.*] The little vixen; she has got ahead of us again. [*Exit R. U. with ELIZABETH.*]

RYDER. What were you running away for?

NELL. Well, I wasn't exactly running—maybe you noticed it.

RYDER. [*Drawing her down on stage to c.*] How sweet you look in blue and white; why don't you wear it all the time?

NELL. Ask Aunt Sue. I was just going to take it off.

RYDER. Oh, but you must n't. I want you to wear it the rest of the evening—to please me—won't you?

NELL. I'd like to—but Aunt Sue won't let me.

RYDER. Oh, perhaps if I'd speak to her. [*Turns toward R. U.*]

NELL. [*Catches his coat.*] Oh, no, don't you do it; I'd only catch the dickens after you'd go.

RYDER. [*Takes both her hands.*] Well, what did Santa Claus bring you?

NELL. Santa Claus—I never knew him.

RYDER. Did you receive no present today?

NELL. Oh, yes; Jerry gave me this blue ribbon. Ain't it pretty?

RYDER. It is indeed. Well, I've brought you something.

NELL. Oh, have you—what is it?

RYDER. See if you can guess.

NELL. A book?

RYDER. No, the library at The Maples is full of good books, and you are welcome to them all. [*Takes small box from his pocket, opens it.*] Here it is—a little gold pin to wear on the ribbon at your throat.

NELL. [*Looks at it.*] Oh, my, it's pretty. [*Draws her hand away.*] But I can't take that.

RYDER. Why not?

NELL. 'Cause it's a pin—and pins cut friendship.

RYDER. [*Laughs.*] Now, Nell, you don't believe that humbug, do you?

NELL. I don't know; lots of people do; and—I ain't going to take any chances losing you.

RYDER. My dear little girl, you couldn't lose me if you tried ever so hard. See, you needn't take it really; I'll pin it here at your throat, may I?

NELL. Yes; that won't be taking it, will it?

[*RYDER pins the brooch at her throat.*]

RYDER. No, you superstitious little goose. There, it's on.

NELL. That makes four.

RYDER. Four what?

NELL. Four things that really belong to me. My mother's dress, her locket, the ribbon that Jerry gave me—and now this. Do you want me to thank you for it?

RYDER. No—not in words—I'm planning to take my payment in another way. Nell, I know you're not happy here; you haven't complained, but I have eyes to see, and it makes me miserable to think of your being subject to the insults of these people. Do you know that lots of girls are married at your age?

NELL. [*Shyly.*] Are they?

RYDER. Would you like to live at The Maples?

NELL. Oh, wouldn't I?

RYDER. Nell, have you ever been in love?

NELL. Ah-hah—

RYDER. What!

NELL. Oh, I didn't mean to say that—it slipped.

RYDER. Who is he—do I know him—why haven't you told me this before?

NELL. You never asked me.

RYDER. How long has this been going on?

NELL. Oh, for some time.

RYDER. Have you told your aunt?

NELL. Oh, no—you must n't tell her.

RYDER. Then you must tell me, Nell. I'm sorry to hear this. I thought I knew all your friends and acquaintances. Tell me, do I know this man?

NELL. I think so. But I won't tell you who it is.

RYDER. I'm sorry, Nell. I came here today with a settled purpose in my mind; can you guess what it was?

NELL. No.

RYDER. To get your uncle's permission to ask you to marry me. And now you tell me you care for someone else.

NELL. I didn't.

RYDER. What?

NELL. You asked me if I was in love, and I said yes.

RYDER. But with whom?

NELL. You.

RYDER. [*Laughing, takes her in his arms.*] You little witch.

[*Enter SUSAN, R. U.*]

SUSAN. Nellie!

NELL. Oh, Lord. [*Runs off L. 2 E.*]

SUSAN. [*Comes down R.*] Mr. Ryder, may I ask what you mean by such carryings-on under my roof?

RYDER. If you will explain what you mean by carryings-on, Mrs. Moore, I may be able to enlighten you.

SUSAN. You know very well what I mean. Your disgraceful behavior with that girl. You can't make me believe that a gentleman in your position has any serious intention with regard to a nameless creature like her. You haven't forgotten what I told you of her mother, have you?

RYDER. No, after having it dinned into my ears so persistently it would be impossible to forget.

SUSAN. Well—everybody in the neighborhood knows it as well as you.

RYDER. Yes, I fancy you made it your business they should.

SUSAN. I am willing to believe that the girl was brazen

enough to encourage you in this foolishness, and of course you were only amusing yourself.

RYDER. [*Goes up, takes hat from hatrack.*] You may believe what you please, Mrs. Moore. But I want you to understand perfectly that I have paid not the slightest regard to the story you took the trouble to tell me; that I consider Nellie the dearest girl I know. I will call on Mr. Moore tomorrow and offer him an explanation of my conduct, as I consider him the proper person to receive it. In the meantime, I bid you good-evening. [*Exit c. d.*]

SUSAN. He will speak to David tomorrow. Can it be that he is serious. [*Looks toward L. 2 E.*] Oh, that ungrateful girl; why did I ever consent to let her live under my roof. She has been the cause of contention and trouble in my house since she was an infant, and now she has crowned it all by ruining my daughter's happiness.

[*Enter ELIZABETH R. U.*]

ELIZABETH. Mother, I saw Mr. Ryder from the kitchen window; why is he going so soon?

SUSAN. Elizabeth, you need never think of John Ryder again. That girl has spoiled everything.

ELIZABETH. What do you mean?

SUSAN. I mean that she is following in her mother's footsteps; when I entered this room I found her in John Ryder's arms.

ELIZABETH. Mother!

SUSAN. Yes, you may well be shocked; but what can you expect of her?

ELIZABETH. He don't care for her—he can't.

SUSAN. I told him I was willing to believe he was not in earnest—

ELIZABETH. Yes—and what did he say?

SUSAN. He said I might believe anything I pleased; what he had to say, he would say to your father.

ELIZABETH. To father. Then he must intend to marry her.

SUSAN. I don't believe it.

ELIZABETH. Whether you believe it or not, he will never be anything to me. Oh, how I hate her—how I hate her—

[Sobs on SUSAN's shoulder, R. C.]

SUSAN. There—there—Elizabeth, don't cry. Our plans have gone wrong, but it's her fault, and she'll suffer for it.

[Enter NELL L. 2 E.; she is dressed in her mother's old-fashioned blue merino gown, with the blue ribbon in her hair. She comes softly down the steps, stands L. C.]

NELL. What's the matter, Elizabeth?

ELIZABETH. Don't talk to me, you disgraceful girl; I hate you—do you hear, I hate you.

NELL. [Quietly.] Yes, I knew that before. There's no use repeating it.

SUSAN. What do you mean by dressing yourself up in that old thing?

NELL. Well, you said I couldn't have the other one. This was my mother's, and I thought you wouldn't mind if I put it on.

ELIZABETH. And what do you think you look like in it?

SUSAN. I'll tell you what she looks like. She is the very picture of Eleanor Moore, her mother—the woman that disgraced our name and made us the laughing stock of the whole village. What do you mean by your disgraceful conduct with John Ryder?

NELL. Disgraceful?

ELIZABETH. Yes—you didn't think he was serious, did you? He's amusing himself with you—just as men do the world over with girls of your class.

NELL. It isn't true, Elizabeth.

SUSAN. It is true. You don't think he'd marry you; why, what name would you be married by—you haven't any, you know. Who was your father? You don't know—neither does any one else. John Ryder knows your story—do you think he is going to give the name of Ryder, one of the proudest in the state, to a nameless creature like you—the very dust of the earth?

NELL. [Has been trying to keep back the tears.] It isn't true, none of it is true; you only say it because you hate me. I won't believe what you say of my mother; I don't care what she was—or what she did—she was my

mother and I love her. If I look like her I'm glad of it. You wouldn't dare do this if Uncle Dave were at home; but you'll never get the chance again. [*Goes to c, up stage.*] I've taken all I'm going to take from you, Aunt Sue; and from you too, Elizabeth. You've insulted me and the memory of my mother for the last time. I'd die before I'd spend another night beneath this roof. [*Takes cloak from hatrack and throws it around her shoulders.*]

SUSAN. Where are you going?

NELL. I don't know, and I don't care.

[*Crying. Exit c., passes window going L.*]

[*The snow is seen falling as the door opens, and through the window.*]

[*SUSAN and ELIZABETH hold their positions until curtain.*]

CURTAIN

ACT THE THIRD

WANDERING TOM'S Cabin. Christmas night. Door and window in flat. Small shelf with few plain dishes L. U. A cot with cover up stage R. Door L. A lamp (lighted) on table R. C. A small stove with teakettle. Small wood box on shelf containing a wedding ring and lock of hair wrapped in yellow paper.

At rise of curtain TOM is seated at table (left side of table). There are a few small dishes on table, which MOSE is in the act of putting away on the shelf, one at a time, talking as he goes back and forth.

TOM. That was a very fine piece of turkey, Mose.

MOSE. Yassir, dat's a fack, it was; I cert'ny did enjoy it scrumptious mahself.

TOM. I'm afraid you ate very little of it.

MOSE. Why, Marse Tom, what you talkin' 'bout—I done eat de whole wish-bone. And to think little Missy came all de way through the snow to bring us our Christmas dinner.

TOM. It was indeed thoughtful of her. It surprises me, however, that her aunt should think of us.

MOSE. Yassah—it done surprise me some, too—but I got my suspicions about dat. I don't believe nobody thought about us but little Missy Nell herself. She powerful fond of you, Marse Tom.

TOM. You and she are my only friends, Mose. I hope to reward you both when fortune smiles on me again.

MOSE. Lor', Marse Tom, fortune's got a more dan smile—she's got to laugh herself most to death to make up for what you done suffered.

TOM. Mose, why did you attach yourself to so unfortunate a being as I?

MOSE. 'Cause de minute I seed you; Marse Tom, I knowed you was a genlum, and I had been lookin' for a genlum a long time. I tell you dey am gettin' mighty scarce.

TOM. Your last master was a gentleman, Mose.

MOSE. Deed he war, sah; he war Master Hunter Boyd of Virginia;; he done left me five hundred dollars in his will.

TOM. Indeed. What became of it?

MOSE. Well, you see, I got a son up north—one of dem no-account Northern niggers—and as soon as he heard about dat five hundred dollars he gets a longin' and achin' to see his poor old father; and he didn't gib me no rest till I packs up and goes north. Well, sah, dat five hundred dollars last just about six months—and den, somehow, dey didn't seem so anxious for my company; thought I was lookin' bad—de northern climate didn't seem to sagastiate wid my system—so I done took de hint and started back to Virginia.

TOM. But this is not Virginia.

MOSE. No, sah, I knows it ain't, but I done blowed so much about that 'ristocratic son o' mine up north, dat I was 'shamed to go back to de old place, so I stops off here, and almost de first person I meets was you, Marse Tom, roamin' around like you war lost. I says to myself, Mose, dar's a genlum what needs a servant; and you is a servant what needs a genlum—so I done engaged you right off.

TOM. I needed you a thousandfold more than you needed me, Mose. You have been my faithful friend and companion. God knows what I should have done without you. Many a one would pay you well for your services, while I can give you nothing.

MOSE. I don't want no pay, Marse Tom—except de priv'lege of 'sociatin' wid a genlum; dat's what I been used to all mah life—and no amount of money could pay me to serve a master that wasn't a genlum. I'm puffickly satisfied with mah present situation. By the way, Marse Tom, what would you like to have for breakfast in de mornin'?

TOM. I'm afraid there's not much choice, Mose. What have you there?

MOSE. [*Looks into jars on shelf.*] Well, dar's some oatmeal—and yer's a little coffee left.

TOM. You got that in the village?

MOSE. Yas, sah, I done chopped quarter load of wood for dat. Den yer's some cornmeal—and—oh, wait a minute—yer's one egg. I reckon it looks like we're goin' to have a pretty fine breakfast.

TOM. I don't know how we are going to get through the winter, Mose. Oh, if I could only do something to help.

MOSE. Now, Marse Tom—don't you go and forget dat you's a genlum. I'm gwine to attend to de providin' of dis fam'ly. I got a kind of superstitious feelin' in mah bones dat we am goin' to have chicken for dinner tomorrow.

TOM. Mose, you must not appropriate anyone's chickens—I strictly forbid that.

MOSE. Who goin' to do any 'propriatin', Marse Tom. If a poor, measly, God-forsaken, homesick chicken comes up to me and say, "Please, Mr. Mose, I ain't got no home, won't you please take me"—do you call it 'propriatin' if I tucks dat poor little wanderer under my coat and takes it home to a nice hot fire? No, sah, dat ain't 'propriatin'—dat—dat's charity. [*Goes to window.*] Lordy, how it am snowin'.

TOM. And this is Christmas night. Have you seen any Christmas trees today, Mose?

MOSE. Yessah—saw a stingy little one down in de vil-lage—not de kind we used to have in old Marse Boyd's home down in Virginny. I 'members when I was jest a little pickaninny, on Christmas mornin' we all used to go up to de big house and get our present—and dar was de big tree, all trimmed wid cakes and candies—and dem little paper angels what hangs by a wire from de branches. And den der was music and dancin' and lots of company comin'

and goin' all day long. I tell you dem was great days—dem was great days.

TOM. Yes, I have a dim recollection of times like those; but I can't place them. Oh, if I could only recall one thing in that forgotten past, I feel that all would return to me.

MOSE. I wish I done knowed you then, Marse Tom; may be I could help you remember.

TOM. The little girl, Nellie, helps me somehow. It is strange, but when I look at her, some thought seems striving to frame itself in my poor head—some fancy that she was connected with the past. Oh, but that is impossible—she is little more than a child.

MOSE. May be she done look like somebody you knowed then.

TOM. That may be the explanation. It will come to me some day—for I am getting stronger, Mose; I can think more connectedly, and I speak more rationally than I did when you first knew me, don't you think so?

MOSE. Yes, indeedy, Marse Tom; dat's a fack, you does. Why, I used to be able to steal a half dozen chicken a week and you neber knowed de dif'frunce. Now, bress de Lord, I can't bring one home widout you wants to know its whole puhsonal history.

TOM. Mose, if I could only recall what the contents of that litle box mean, the mystery would be solved, and Wandering Tom would come into his own again. [*Indicates the small box on shelf.*]

MOSE. [*Looking toward the box.*] Yassah—dat certain'y am most curious.

TOM. Bring it here and let me look at them again. I am feeling wonderfully hopeful tonight. Who knows but what I am on the brink of a discovery.

MOSE. [*Takes box and places it on table near TOM. He remains back of table.*] How come you to hold on to that little box all these years, Marse Tom?

TOM. When I began this strange existence of mine, this little box and a large sum of money were in my possession. I don't know how I came by them. The sum of money is long ago spent, but the little box I will never part with until it helps me to unearth the past.

MOSE. I hope it does, Marse, but I don't see how dem

triflin' little things am goin' to do much. Nothin' but a ring and a lock of hair—dat's all.

TOM. [*Takes ring out of box.*] See, a plain gold ring—the words "From Tom to Eleanor" engraved on the inner side; and beneath them the word "Mizpah."

MOSE. Dat done caused all de trouble—dat Mizpah—I never did believe in dem heathen names.

TOM. And the lock of hair—as soft and silky as a child's; see, the paper wrapping is yellow with age. [*Reads from paper wrapping.*] "From Eleanor to Tom." [*Puts articles in box on table.*] Eleanor! Who was Eleanor? Oh, God, if you would only let me remember. [*Sobs and buries his head in his hands.*]

[*MOSE stands in silent sympathy.*]

NELL. [*Outside the window.*] Mr. Tom—Mr. Tom—open the door.

[*TOM raises his head. MOSE listens.*]

MOSE. What's dat—a ghost—did you hear somethin', Marse Tom?

TOM. Yes—someone called me.

NELL. Mr. Tom—Mose—open the door.

MOSE. In de name of de great Jehovah—if it ain't Missy Nell. [*Opens door.*] Bress dat child—out in all dis weather.

NELL. [*Enters, runs and kneels at Tom's chair.*] Oh, Mr. Tom—let me stay here—I have nowhere else to go.

TOM. Why, my little friend—on a night like this you are away from home?

NELL. I have no home—I have no mother—no father—no friends in all the world but you two; you must let me stay with you tonight; tomorrow I will go away.

TOM. Go away?

NELL. Yes—anywhere to get away from it all; I never want to look anyone I know in the face again.

MOSE. Look yer, Missy, dey didn't drive you out on a night like dis, did they?

NELL. They might as well have done it. They taunted me and insulted me until I could no longer stand it. I am

going to leave this place. The world is big and I can find a place in it if I try.

TOM. I don't know what your trouble is, little friend, but Mose and I are proud and happy to have you here. It's a poor shelter, but you are welcomed to it.

MOSE. And don't you worry—Missy; 'case I'm going to make you powerful comfortable. And you mus n't think of leavin' tomorrow—'cause dere's really no necessity; we'se got a whole lot—in fack we'se got a super'bundance of pervisions on hand—and tomorrow we'se going to have chicken stew—wid real chicken—dat is if de chicken don't object.

NELL. Yes, I must go away tomorrow. I'm going down to the village and find work—then when I can I'm going still farther. I want to get as far away as possible.

TOM. Does your uncle know of this?

NELL. No, he wasn't at home. Uncle Dave has been good to me; but nothing will ever make me go back after what they said tonight. They insulted the memory of my mother.

TOM. Your mother is dead, Nellie?

NELL. Yes, she died when I was an infant; oh, if she had only lived; if she had only lived. [*Weeps on Tom's shoulder.*]

MOSE. Now, look yer, Missy Nell—if yo' all is goin' to be mah guest—I'se goin' to lay down some rules and regulations—and de first and de last one is—der ain't goin' to be no weepin'. Dis life am too short for tears, and when you looks at it square in de face—what good do they do? Only spoil yo' pretty eyes, and make poor old Mose mis'able. Now, don't you' cry no more, honey—don't yo' do it—dat's all. [*Mose has been gradually drifting into tears, and ends up by crying.*]

NELL. [*Rising and going to Mose.*] Oh, Mose, I'm sorry; I won't cry any more. I ought to be glad to have you and Mr. Tom to come to, without making you unhappy, too. Look. [*Brushes tears from her eyes.*] They're all gone.

MOSE. [*Brushes his tears away.*] So am mine, honey.

TOM. Now, Mose, Miss Nellie must be mentally and physically tired. Get my room in order, so that she may rest there tonight.

NELL. Oh, Mr. Tom, don't give up your room to me; I can rest here in this chair.

TOM. No, my child, you must have a good night's rest. As for me—well, I often spend half the night in this chair, thinking and trying to recall the past. I shall do so to-night.

MOSE. Now, Marse Tom—I ain't goin' to have you sitting up half de night. You is going to go sound asleep on dat cot in de corner—and you ain't goin' to be long about it neither.

TOM. But where will you sleep, Mose?

MOSE. Dat's all right 'bout me. Nigger can sleep on a rail fence if he wants to; and a genlum can't. Now, der's plenty of room for everybody—and I'm goin' this minute to fix up de other room for Missy Nell. [*Exit L.*]

TOM. Come here, my child. [NELL *kneels beside Tom's chair.*] It pains me to see you unhappy. I will miss you greatly if you go away, for your friendship has meant more to me than you will ever know. Have you no other friend to advise you in this matter?

NELL. There's Mr. Ryder; but I never want to see him again after what they've told him.

TOM. He is the young man I have seen you with occasionally?

NELL. Yes, sir, he lives at The Maples.

TOM. The Maples?

NELL. Yes; don't you remember? I saw you there one day last fall—you were looking through the window, and I asked you what you were doing; don't you remember?

TOM. I remember.

NELL. What were you looking for that day, Mr. Tom?

TOM. I don't know, Nellie; the place has an attraction for me; I believe I know every nook and corner of it. Even the name sounds sweetly familiar to my ear—The Maples.

NELL. Mr. Ryder lives there all alone except for the servants. He inherited the place years ago from a distant relation of his who was killed.

TOM. Killed?

NELL. Yes, he met with an accident while mountain-climbing in Switzerland; his name was Thomas Osbourne.

TOM. Thomas Osbourne!

MOSE. [*At door L.*] Now, Missy, your room is ready. And I'm going to light this candle for you; when you are through with it, jest please distinguish it. [*Has lighted candle and given to NELL.*]

[*TOM sits in deep thought—repeating to himself “Thomas Osbourne.”*]

NELL. [*Throws off her cloak, takes candle, approaches TOM.*] I'll say good-night, Mr. Tom.

TOM. [*Turns slowly toward NELL.*] Good-night, my child. [*Sees NELL in her mother's gown, looks fixedly at her, then rises slowly, his eyes on NELL; goes to her, and whispers.*] “Eleanor.”

NELL. [*Quietly.*] Yes—that was my mother's name.

[*MOSE goes softly and takes candle from NELL's right hand—goes up stage quietly so as not to disturb the scene.*]

TOM. Your mother?

NELL. Yes. See, here is her picture. [*Gives TOM locket.*]

TOM. [*Looking closely at picture.*] Eleanor, Eleanor. How came you by this, my child?

NELL. My mother left it to me when she died?

TOM. [*Softly.*] She is dead?

NELL. Yes.

TOM. What was your father's name?

NELL. I never knew my father. They say he deserted my mother and left her to die in poverty and shame.

TOM. It's a lie.

NELL. What?

MOSE. [*Comes down L.*] Why, Marse Tom.

TOM. Thank God—I'm regaining my memory. This is the picture of my wife whom I left—God knows how many years ago—thinking to return in a few short months. Then that awful fall in the mountains of Switzerland—and then darkness—and a vain struggling to remember.

NELL. The mountains of Switzerland—that is how Thomas Osbourne lost his life.

TOM. I am Thomas Osbourne.

NELL. Of The Maples?

TOM. Of The Maples. It is all coming back to me—one thing at a time—until my brain is ready to burst. I have known nothing—not even my own name—until I saw you standing there before me the very likeness of my Eleanor. I believed for an instant it was her spirit. Tell me, how long has this condition lasted?

NELL. My mother has been dead fifteen years.

TOM. Fifteen years. [*Pause—looks at NELL.*] You speak of this lady as your mother?

NELL. Yes.

TOM. Then if that be true, you are my daughter. [*Holds out his arms to NELL.*]

NELL. [*Runs to him, throws her arms about his neck.*] Oh, Mr. Tom, I've found a father at last.

TOM. Can it be true; out of this awful wreck of a human life one jewel is left me, my daughter. Oh, my Eleanor, how I shall cherish you.

MOSE. If you please be so kind, Marse Tom, won't you tell me what all dis am about?

TOM. Mose, old friend, I told you it would not be long before my prayers would be answered. I have regained my daughter and my name tonight.

MOSE. You don't mean to tell me you is dat Mr. Thomas Osbourne dat has been dead all dese years?

TOM. I am Thomas Osbourne; The Maples is my home.

NELL. But Mr. Ryder has The Maples; we'll be taking it away from him.

MOSE. From what I knows of dat young man he'll be tickled to death when he learns who is getting it.

NELL. Oh, Mr. Tom, it all seems too strange to be true. I hope I don't wake and find it all a dream.

TOM. No, my child; the dream is o'er; the awakening has come at last.

[TOM L. C. NELL C. MOSE L. C.]

CURTAIN

ACT THE FOURTH

Same as Act II. No snow falling. Bright light. Morning of the day after Christmas. At rise of curtain, SUSAN is standing at window looking out.

[ELIZABETH enters, L. 2. E.]

ELIZABETH. Where is father?

SUSAN. Gone down to the village to look for Nell—he has been gone some time.

ELIZABETH. [*Comes L. C.*] I heard him come home this morning, but I didn't come down to breakfast—because I didn't want to meet him.

SUSAN. He didn't eat any breakfast himself.

ELIZABETH. Of course he blames us?

SUSAN. [*Comes c.*] Of course he does. I told him she went of her own accord, but he won't believe it.

ELIZABETH. Where could she have gone last night?

SUSAN. I wouldn't care where she went if your father would only be reasonable about it. He carried on as if it were his own child. As for me—I'm glad she's gone.

ELIZABETH. Where is Jerry?

SUSAN. He is searching for her, too—tracking about in the snow since six o'clock this morning.

ELIZABETH. Why do you allow him to do it?

SUSAN. Allow him? He almost raised the roof off the house when I tried to keep him here. She has succeeded in ruining that boy until he is entirely beyond my control.

[DAVID's voice heard outside.]

ELIZABETH. There's father now—I don't want to see him. [*Exit L.*]

[Enter DAVID c. D.]

SUSAN. Well, have you heard anything?

DAVID. No, no one in the village has seen her.

SUSAN. Don't you think you'd better have some breakfast, David?

DAVID. No, I'll not sit down at that table until Nellie sits there with me. Where is Jerry?

SUSAN. He has gone to look for her.

DAVID. Well, tell him I want to see him when he comes in. [*Exit R. U.*]

SUSAN. [*Comes down c.*] Where could she have gone?

[*Enter ARABELLA, C. D.*]

ARABELLA. Land sakes, Susan. I've just heard about it, and I thought I'd break my neck getting here. Is it true—has she disappeared just the way her mother did?

SUSAN. How did you know, Arabella?

ARABELLA. Good gracious, almost everybody in the village knows it by this time—news travels fast. Do you know what I says when I heard it—I says, "I'm glad of it, for Susan Moore's sake, for that girl has been the bane of her life."

SUSAN. Well, I'll have to take her back again, when they find her; so I don't see what I've gained.

ARABELLA. Susan—don't you do it. If I was in your place, I'd never let her light inside that door again.

SUSAN. But you haven't got a husband, Arabella.

ARABELLA. No, thank heaven, I haven't.

[*Enter DAVID R. U.*]

DAVID. Hasn't that boy come in yet?

SUSAN. No; he'll be laid up with a cold if he keeps this up.

[*JERRY heard outside.*]

DAVID. Here he is now.

[*DAVID R. U. ARABELLA up stage C. SUSAN L. C.*]

[*Enter JERRY out of breath.*]

JERRY. I've found her.

SUSAN AND ARABELLA. What—where?

DAVID. [*Pats JERRY on shoulder.*] Good boy, Jerry—where is she?

JERRY. At Wanderin' Tom's cabin. First, I went up to The Maples and asked Mr. Ryder if he had seen her.

SUSAN. What did he say?

JERRY. He said a whole lot of things—but he didn't lose any time gettin' into his coat to go look for her. Then I happened to think of Wanderin' Tom, and we went there—and there she was as warm as toast, and happy as an angel.

SUSAN. Happy!

JERRY. Yep; there's somethin' goin' on there that I didn't wait to hear about; I knew Dad would be worried, so I hurried home. But Mr. Ryder stayed, and he'll tell you all about it.

DAVID. Is Nell coming home?

JERRY. Yes—they're all comin'. Mr. Ryder says you can prepare for a surprise.

SUSAN. A surprise—what can he mean?

ARABELLA. Land sakes—I hate this suspense—ain't it awful, Susan?

[Enter ELIZABETH L. 2. E.]

ELIZABETH. Has Jerry learned anything?

DAVID. Yes, Nell is found and is coming home. Now that you are all here, I want it understood that the child must be received with kindness. If anything had happened to her last night, I'd never have forgiven you as long as I lived. You understand me, Elizabeth?

ELIZABETH. Yes, father; I'm glad she's found.

[Enter TEMPLETON, C. D.]

DR. TEMPLETON. Good morning everybody.

ALL. [*Ad lib.*] Good morning, etc.

DR. TEMPLETON. I met Mr. Ryder on the way; he has stopped to speak to someone; he'll be here in a moment.

DAVID. He told you about Nellie?

DR. TEMPLETON. Yes—I'm heartily glad she is found.

[Goes to ELIZABETH L.]

[Enter RYDER.]

DAVID. Good morning, Mr. Ryder; have you brought Nellie with you?

RYDER. Yes—they are coming. I came on ahead to tell you what has happened. The man you have all known as

Wandering Tom is Thomas Osbourne, who was supposed to have died in Switzerland fifteen years ago.

ALL. What! Impossible! etc. [*Ad lib.*]

RYDER. That isn't all. You remember the story of Thomas Osbourne—how he quarreled with his mother and left The Maples one summer seventeen years ago?

DAVID. I'll never forget it. It was the same year my sister Eleanor left us.

RYDER. Ah—those two events are closely related. Thomas Osbourne and Eleanor Moore left here together and were secretly married in New York.

SUSAN. Married!

RYDER. This marriage was the cause of the quarrel between himself and mother. When his mother's health required it, he left his wife in New York, well provided for, returned here and took his mother to Europe, fully expecting to return in a few months and make known his marriage. Well—then came that fall in the mountains, the total loss of memory following it—and these years of fruitless wandering.

DAVID. How came he back here?

RYDER. That he cannot explain except that some instinct stronger than himself drew him to his old home.

DAVID. Then he is the real owner of The Maples?

RYDER. Yes, I am only a distant relative of the Osbournes; the property belongs to him.

SUSAN. What was it that made him remember?

RYDER. Seeing Nellie standing before him last night in her mother's dress—it was her mother's wedding gown.

ARABELLA. Why didn't Eleanor tell of the wedding?

DAVID. My sister was unconscious when we lifted her from the floor that Christmas night, and she never regained consciousness except at the very last when she indicated to me that she wanted her baby to have her gown and locket.

SUSAN. And she wore no wedding ring.

RYDER. That was in her husband's possession—when he started for Europe she took it from her finger and bade him wear it until his return. He gave it to Nellie last night.

ARABELLA. Well, I'm almost too dumfounded to speak. To think she has been an heiress all this time. But I must say for myself—I always did consider her a lady.

RYDER. I think they are coming. [*Opens door.*]
[*Enter NELL with TOM and MOSE. NELL runs to DAVID R.*]
DAVID. [*His arms about NELL.*] My little girl—welcome home.

[*NELL takes TOM's hand and leads him to SUSAN L. C.*]

NELL. This is my father, Aunt Sue.

TOM. I thank you, madam, for the care of my daughter.

SUSAN. I suppose Nellie feels rather bitter toward me.

NELL. I'm too happy to do that, Aunt Sue; I'm willing to forget if you are.

[*ELIZABETH approaches NELL c.*]

ELIZABETH. Won't you shake hands with me, Nellie?

NELL. [*Takes her hand.*] With all my heart, Elizabeth.

ELIZABETH. You must feel awkward in that old fashioned dress; won't you wear one of my new ones today?

NELL. No, I wouldn't change this today for anything.

[*Takes off cloak.*]

ARABELLA. [*Comes to NELL.*] My dear child, I congratulate you. You know I always took an interest in you.

NELL. Yes, I know you did, Miss Arabella. Aunt Sue, my father and Mose and I have had nothing but corncakes this morning; will you give us some breakfast?

SUSAN. My dear child—the breakfast is on the table; but nobody would touch a thing until you were found. [*Goes to R. U. E.*] Come, everybody, please. [*All go up to R. U. E. and exit except ARABELLA, who is L. C. RYDER who is R. and NELL and TOM who are R. C.*] Arabella, will you stay?

ARABELLA. Land sakes, yes, did you ever see me refuse?

[*Exit quickly R. U. E.*]

[*NELL leads TOM up to R. U. E. and motions for him to go, she wants to speak to RYDER. TOM understands and exit quietly.*]

NELL. [*Comes to RYDER.*] Are you sorry this has happened?

RYDER. [*Turns and takes her hands.*] Sorry. Why, Nell,

I'm more than glad that you have come into your own again.

NELL. What were you going to say to me yesterday when Aunt Sue caught us?

RYDER. Yesterday. You were a poor little girl yesterday, Nell. Today you are heiress to the largest estate in the county. It wouldn't be fair to say today what I intended to say yesterday.

NELL. [*Takes wedding ring off her finger.*] Here's my mother's wedding ring. [*Holds out her hand.*] Put it on—won't you?

RYDER. [*Takes ring from her and slips it on her outstretched finger. Raises her hand to his lips and kisses it.*]

NELL. Now, won't you say it?

RYDER. No, Nell, I can't.

NELL. [*Disappointed, turns and walks slowly to c.*] And I thought I was going to be so happy today.

RYDER. [*Goes R. c.*] Why, Nell, I can't ask you to marry me. I'm only a pauper. [*Throws his arms out.*]

NELL. Then I'll ask you, for what am I, but the "Dust of the Earth." [*NELL runs to him, he holds her in his arms.*]

CURTAIN

Because I Love You

Drama in Four Acts

By JOHN A. FRASER

Author of "A Woman's Honor," "A Noble Outcast," "A Modern Ananias," "Santiago," etc.

Price, 25 cents

Eight male, four female characters. Plays two hours. Modern costumes. This is probably the strongest drama written of the modern romantic style. It is a pure love story and its sentiment and pathos are of the sterling, honest kind which appeals to every man and woman with a human heart. The stage business will be found extremely novel, but easily accomplished. The climaxes are all new and tremendously effective. One climax especially has never been surpassed.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Imogene Courtleigh. Wilful, wayward and wealthy....Juvenile lead
Ginger. A Gypsy waif.....Soubrette
Nance Tyson. Her supposed mother.....Character
Prudence Freeheart. A poor relation.....Old maid comedy
Horace Verner. An artist and accidentally a married man.....
.....Juvenile lead
Dick Potts. His chum and incidentally in love with Ginger.....
.....Eccentric comedy
Ira Courtleigh. Imogene's guardian.....Heavy
Buck Tyson. A Gypsy tinker.....Character comedy
Elmer Van Sittert. Anglomaniac, New Yorker.....Dude comedy
Major Duffy. County Clerk and Confederate veteran.....
.....Irish comedy
Squire Ripley. A Virginia landlord.....Character old man
Lige. A gentleman of color.....Negro character
Note: Squire Ripley and Van Sittert may double.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

Act 1. "The George Washington," a country tavern in old Virginia. An impromptu wedding. "When I was on the boards at old Pott's theayter." "Horace has fallen in love and has done nothing but rave about her ever since." "The marriage ceremony performed, I depart, and you will make no attempt ever to see me again." "Except at your own request, never!"

Act 2. Lovers' Leap, a Blue Mountain precipice. A daring rescue. "Gold does not always purchase happiness, lady." "Do you ever feel the need of a faithful friend?" "I do, I do, I'm thinking of buying a bulldog." "Look at the stride of him, and Imogene sitting him as if he were a part of herself." Within twenty feet of certain death. "Gone? Without even my thanks for such a deed of desperate heroism?"

Act 3. The Courtleigh Place. A woman's folly. "And you say his father was a gentleman?" "I have already refused to sign the document." "Stand back, she is my wife."

Act 4. The "Mountain Studio." "You're too good to let that French girl get you." "I struck him full in the face and the challenge followed." "You will not meet this man, dear love?" "I shall, at least, be blow for blow." "I'll release you from your promise. Fight that man." "I'm the happiest man in old Virginia, because you love me."

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CHICAGO ILLINOIS

Capt. Racket

A Comedy in Three Acts

By CHARLES TOWNSEND

Price, 25 cents

This play by Mr. Townsend is probably one of his most popular productions; it certainly is one of his best. It is full of action from start to finish. Comic situations rapidly follow one after another, and the act endings are especially strong and lively. Every character is good and affords abundant opportunity for effective work. Can be played by five men and three women, if desired. The same scene is used for all the acts, and it is an easy interior. A most excellent play for repertoire companies. No seeker for a good play can afford to ignore it.

CHARACTERS

CAPT. ROBERT RACKET, one of the National Guard. A lawyer when he has nothing else to do, and a liar all the time.....

.....Comedy lead
BADIAH DAWSON, his uncle, from Japan, "where they make tea".....Comedy old man

TIMOTHY TOLMAN, his friend, who married for money, and is sorry for it.....Juvenile man

MR. DALROY, his father-in-law, jolly old cove.....Eccentric

HOBSON, waiter from the "Cafe Gloriana," who adds to the confusion.....Utility

CLARICE, the Captain's pretty wife, out for a lark, and up to "anything awful".....Comedy lead

MRS. TOLMAN, a lady with a temper, who finds her Timothy a vexation of spirit.....Old woman

KATY, a mischievous maid.....Soubrette

TOOTSY, the "Kid," Tim's olive branch.....Props.

SYNOPSIS

Act I. Place: Tim's country home on the Hudson near New York. Time: A breezy morning in September. The Captain's fancy takes a flight and trouble begins.

Act II. Place: the same. Time: the next morning. How one yarn requires another. "The greatest liar unhung." Now the trouble increases and the Captain prepares for war.

Act III. Place: the same. Time: Evening of the same day. More misery. A general muddle. "Dance or you'll die." Cornered at last. The Captain owns up. All serene.

Time of playing: Two hours.

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CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

Uncle Rube

An Original Homestead Play in Four Acts

By CHARLES TOWNSEND

The Finest Rural Drama Ever Published

Price, 25 cents

CHARACTERS

RUBEN RODNEY (Uncle Rube), Justice of the Peace, School Trustee, and a master hand at "swappin' hosses"....Character lead
SIMON SMARLEY, a smooth and cunning old villain.....Character heavy
MARK, his son, a promising young rascal.....Straight heavy
GORDON GRAY, a popular young artist.....Juvenile lead
UPSON ASTERBILT, an up-to-date New York dude.....
.....Character comedy
IKE, the hired man. "I want ter know!".....Eccentric
BUB GREEN, a comical young rustic.....Low comedy
BILL TAPPAN, a country constable.....Comedy
MILLICENT LEE, "the pretty school teacher".....Juvenile lady
MRS. MARTHA BUNN, a charming widow....Character comedy
TAGGS, a waif from New York.....Soubrette
Time—Mid Autumn. Place—Vermont.

Time of playing—Two hours and a quarter.

SYNOPSIS

- ACT I. The Old Homestead. Uncle Rube arrives.
ACT II. The Constable's office. The plot to ruin Uncle Rube.
ACT III. Evening at the old farm. Uncle Rube is arrested.
ACT IV. The Constable's office again. The old farmer wins!

This play was written by one of the most popular of American dramatists, whose works have sold by the hundreds of thousands. One of the best plays of its class ever written. Splendid characters. Powerful climaxes. Bright wit. Merry humor. Very easy to produce. Requires only three scenes. No shifts of scenery during any act. Costumes all modern. No difficult properties required.

THE AUTHOR'S OPINION

MR. TOWNSEND says of this drama: "I consider that 'Uncle Rube' is far superior to any play depicting country life that I have yet written."

This is the play for everybody—amateurs as well as professionals. It can be produced on any stage, and pleases all classes, from the most critical city audiences to those of the smallest country towns. Printed directly from the author's acting copy, with all the original stage directions.

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'The Spinsters' Convention

(The Original Old Maids' Convention)

Price, 25 cents

An evening's entertainment which is always a sure hit and a money-maker. Has been given many hundred times by schools, societies and churches, with the greatest success. An evening of refined fun. It requires from twelve to twenty ladies and two gentlemen, although ladies may take the two male parts. A raised platform with curtains at the back is all the stage requires, but a fully equipped opera stage may be utilized and to great advantage.

Ridiculous old maid costumes, with all their frills and furbelows, their cork-screw curls, mittens, work bags, bird cages, etc., are the proper costumes. Later on in the program some pretty young women in modern evening dress are required. The latter should each be able to give a number of a miscellaneous program, that is, be able to sing, play some instrument, dance, whistle or recite well.

This entertainment utilizes all sorts of talent, and gives each participant a good part. Large societies can give every member something to do.

SYNOPSIS

Gathering of the Members of the Society—The Roll-Call—The Greeting Song—Minutes of the last meeting—Report of The Treasurer—Music: "Sack Waltz"—A paper on Woman's Rights—Song: "No One to Love, None to Caress."—Reading of "Marriage Statistics"—The Advent of the Mouse—Initiation of two Candidates into the Society—The Psalm of Marriage—Secretary's Report on Eligible Men—A Petition to Congress—Original Poem by Betsy Bobbett—Song: "Why Don't the Men Propose?"—Report of The Vigilance Committee—An Appeal to the Bachelors—Prof. Make-over—The Remodelscope.—Testimonials—The Transformation and a miscellaneous program.

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Hick'ry Farm

A Comedy Drama of New England Life in Two Acts

By EDWIN M. STERN

Price, 25 cents

Six male, two female characters. The play deals with the same phases of life as "The Old Homestead" and "The County Fair," and is written in the same comedy vein which has rendered these two pieces so popular. The courtship of the Irish alderman is one of the most ludicrous scenes ever written, while the scenes between the old farmer and his daughter are most touching and pathetic. Scenery, a set cottage and a plain room. Costumes of the day. Time of playing, an hour and a half.

SYNOPSIS OF INCIDENTS

ACT I—Hick'ry Farm House

Darkwood's Plot—Skinner tempted—Money! Gold!—Zekiel appears—"Be you Ann Maria's boy?"—Fortune's reminiscences—The deed must be stolen!—Hard cider—Aunt Priscilla's love—The alderman's bregue—"Dear departed Hezekiah"—Jessie's secret—"Then you still love me?"—"Larry McKeegan's courtin'"—The "widdy" succumbs—"Zekiel's fav'rit' song"—McKeegan's ghost—Jack Nelson makes a discovery—Jessie has gone!—"Heaven help me!"—Zekiel's prayer.

ACT II—In Fortune's Shanry

Zekiel's misfortunes—The rent collector—Darkwood's insult—"Villain, you lie!"—Skinner's remorse—The New York detective—The bank robbery—Darkwood threatens—Jessie returns—The alderman married—"Sure it's a darlint little woife she is"—Zekiel's happiness—"Gcsh! I ain't felt so gol-darned happy sinct I wuz a boy"—A trap for Darkwood—Jack and Jessie reunited—Priscilla pacified—Darkwood at bay—"Stand aside, as you value your lives!"—The detective fires—"You've done for me this time!"—Zekiel's forgiveness—Old Hick'ry farm restored.

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Joe Ruggles
OR
THE GIRL MINER
A Comedy Drama in Four Acts
By **FRANK J. DEAN**

Price, 25 cents

Nine male, three female characters. A vigorous, stirring play, depicting peculiar types of life in a large city and in the mining districts of the West. The parts of Joe Ruggles, the miner, Hans Von Bush (Dutch dialect), and Richard Hamilton, the scheming villain, all afford opportunity for clever work; while the part of Madge (soubrette), who afterwards assumes the character of Mark Lynch, is an excellent one for a bright young actress.

Scenery—City street, showing R. R. Station; rocky pass, with set cabins; a wood scene, and two plain interiors. Costumes of the day. Time of playing, two and a half hours.

SYNOPSIS OF EVENTS

ACT I—Entrance to Railroad Station

Looking for a victim—Joe Ruggles—"Them gaitoots is worse than grizzlies"—"Morning papers"—Madge and Bess plying their trades—"Can't you sing Joe a song?"—Hamilton and his pal confer—Tom Howarth gains important information—"Don't you dare to lay hands on us!"—Hamilton tries to maintain his authority—"Who? Old Joe!"

ACT II—Doomsday's Hotel, Dare-devil's Gulch, California

The landlord secures a guest—Hans disappointed—"Dot is a mis-dake"—A ghost story—The "Kid and his sister"—"Did I hurt your highness?"—Hans and Doomsday have another talk—Kate Laurel meets the young miner—"Yah, dot vas vot I t'inks"—Madge's disguise penetrated—She recognizes an old enemy—"Now, George Smith, take your choice"—Joe Ruggles as a tramp—"Ef yer think yer can pick on me because I'm han'some ye'll find me ter hum"—Hamilton appears—"Those two youngsters are mine"—The tramp takes a hand.

ACT III—Wood Scene

A lively ghost—Hamilton and Smith plan more villainy—Old Joe thinks of turning Detective—Kate Laurel again—"There is a secret connected with my life"—Kate's confession—"What do you mean, sir?"—Tom Howarth once more—"Vos you looking for a hotel?"—Planning an abduction—Old Joe as an Irishman—"Phat does yez want wid me?"—Undertakes to be a detective—Takes a hand in the abduction—"Do it at your peril."

ACT IV

Hans hears, and tells, the latest news—"I nefer pelieved dot spook peesness"—Kate Laurel astonished—Hamilton attempts flight—"De poys haf got Mr. Hamilton, und dey vill gif him a necktie barty"—Arrest of Smith—"Get out mit my vay, I vas de United States Mail"—Tom meets his old friend under new circumstances—"Do you want me, Tom?"—Old Joe gives consent—A happy ending.

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The Outcast's Daughter A Drama in Four Acts

By MARION EDDY PRICE, 25 CENTS

Ten male, five female and one child characters. Plays two and one-half hours. Modern costumes. Three interior, one exterior scenes, all easily arranged where there is any scenery at hand. No stronger melodrama has been given the play-loving public. Full of the strongest appealing heart interest, intense, pathetic, real life, where joy and laughter are mingled with pathos and suffering, but all ending happily. A melodrama without a villain or the use of firearms. Amateurs may play it successfully, it plays itself, and it is adapted to strong repertoire companies.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Carl Faber.....	An ex-convict
Howard Ross.....	A manufacturer
Dennis Hogan.....	Servant to Ross
Abel	Gardener to Ross
Judge Havens.....	Of the police court
Recorder	Of the police court
Lettner	Clerk of police court
Second Court Clerk.....	Clerk of police court
Two policemen	
Little Hugo.....	Agatha's child
Agatha Steme	Ross' bookkeeper
Ida Rheinhold.....	A retired singer
Mrs. Wilmuth.....	A washerwoman
Katie	Factory girl
Frances	Factory girl

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

Act 1. Ross' private office. "What has given me the honor of this visit?" "I will never sing again. My life has been a sad failure." "Good God! My mother!" "I have done wrong, I confess, but when a mother asks, a child must forgive. Oh, Mr. Ross, help me." "You, my rich and famous mother, to you I was nothing, and you—you are nothing—nothing to me." "Agatha! Agatha! My child! My child!"

Act 2. Agatha's attic. "My poor father. So young and strong. How I could have loved him." "Yes, Katie is right, I have nothing but bread for my sweet child." "Madam, I would lie if I say she vas anything but a lady." "On the other side, towards the garden, there are a few rooms I have never used. If you will take them—" "You do not look like a man who could commit murder. How was it?" "I was a weak man and many misfortunes made me desperate." "My picture! I must be mad." "You are good, child, but you shall not call me father." "Father! Father!"

Act 3. Ross' Garden. "He is so good to me, but I cannot forget my poor unhappy father." "The picture was taken when I was young. He shall have it." "Stay here and be my wife." "That suspicious old man is in the garden." "For her I sacrificed everything." "Do you want to go to prison again?" "My father needs me to defend and comfort him."

Act 4. A Police Court. "Do not ask me, your honor—I am an ex-convict." "Your silence will not help you." "It vas dark und Mrs. Steme vas that scared she vas faint." "I hope, sor, yer honor believes in a future life, sor." "He wished to see his child; I am his child." "Grandfather, we love you." "I am his wife. Do not condemn him."

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A Woman's Honor

A Drama in Four Acts

By JOHN A. FRASER

Author of "A Noble Outcast," "Santiago," "Modern Ananias," etc.

Price, 25 cents

Seven male, three female characters. Plays two hours. For intense dramatic action, thrilling climaxes, uproarious comedy and a story of absorbing romantic interest, actors, either professional or amateur, will find few plays to equal "A Woman's Honor." With careful rehearsals they will find a sure hit is made every time without difficulty.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

General Mark Lester. A Hero of the Cuban Ten Years' War..Lead
Pedro Mendez. His half brother.....Heavy
Dr. Garcia. Surgeon of the Madaline.....Straight
Gilbert Hall, M. D. In love with Olive.....Juvenile
Robert Glenn. A Wall Street Banker.....Old man
Gregory Grimes. Lester's Private Secretary.....Eccentric Comedy
Ebenezer. Glenn's Butler.....Negro Comedy
Olive { Glenn's } Juvenile lead
Sally { Daughters } Soubrette
Maria. Wife of Pedro.....Character

NOTE.—Glenn and Garcia may double.

Act 1. The Glenn Mansion, New York City.

Act 2. The Isle of Santa Cruz, off San Domingo. One month later.

Acts 3 and 4. Lester's home at Santa Cruz. Five months later. Between Acts 3 and 4 one day elapses.

SYNOPSIS OF INCIDENTS

Act 1. Handsome drawingroom at Glenn's. Sally and Ebenezer. "I isn't imputtinent, no, no. Missy." "Papa can't bear Gregory Grimes, but I'm going to marry him, if I feel like it." "Going away?" "I was dizzy for a moment, that was all." "This marriage is absolutely necessary to prevent my disgrace." "General Lester, you are a noble man and I will repay my father's debt of honor." "Robert Glenn is dead."

Act 2. Isle of Santa Cruz. "Mark brings his American bride to his home today." "You and I and our child will be no better than servants." "How can I help but be happy with one so good and kind?" "It means that I am another man's wife." "Dat's mine; don't you go to readin' my lub lettahs in public."

Act 3. Sitting-room in Lester's house. "What has happened?" "Is my husband safe?" "Break away, give your little brother a chance." "To tell the truth, my heart is breaking." "Debt of duty! and I was fool enough to think she loved me."

Act 4. "The illness of the general has an ugly look." "The gossips have it she would rejoice to be rid of her husband." "The Gilbert Hall I loved is dead." "Standing on the brink of the grave, my vision is clearer." "Forgive, and I will devote my life to making you happy in order to repay the debt I owe you—a debt of honor."

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Diamonds and Hearts

A Comedy Drama in Three Acts

By EFFIE W. MERRIMAN

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This play has become one of the most popular in America. The good plot, the strong "heart" interest, and the abundant comedy all combine to make a most excellent drama. "Bub" Barnes is a fine character of the Josh Whitcomb type, and his sister is a worthy companion "bit." Sammy is an excruciatingly funny little darkey. The other characters are good. Fine opportunity for introducing specialties. The play has so many good points that it never fails to be a success.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

BERNICE HALSTEAD, a young lady of eighteen, with an affection of the heart, a love for fun and hatred of arithmetic.....
AMY HALSTEAD, her sister, two years younger, fond of frolic..
INEZ GRAY, a young lady visitor, willing to share in the fun....
MRS. HALSTEAD, a widow, and stepmother of the Halstead girls
HANNAH MARY BARNES, or "Sis," a maiden lady who keeps house for her brother.....
DWIGHT BRADLEY, a fortune hunter and Mrs. Halstead's son by a former marriage.....
DR. BURTON, a young physician.....
SAMMY, the darkey bell-boy in the Halstead house.....
ABRAHAM BARNES, or "Bub," a yankee farmer, still unmarried at forty—a diamond in the rough.....
ATTORNEY; SHERIFF

Time of playing, two hours.

Two interior scenes. Modern costumes.

SYNOPSIS OF INCIDENTS

Act. 1. Parlor of the Halstead home. The young doctor. The three girls plot to make his acquaintance. An affection of the heart. "Easy to fool a young doctor," but not so easy after all. The stepmother and her son. The stolen diamonds. The missing will. Plot to win Bernice. "I would not marry Dwight Bradley for all the wealth the world contains." Driven from home.

Act 2. Kitchen of the Barnes' farm house. Bub takes off his boots. The new school ma'am. "Supper's ready." "This is our nephew and he's a doctor." Recognition. A difficult problem in arithmetic. The doctor to the rescue. "I'm just the happiest girl in the world." "I've come to pop the question, an' why don't I do it?" Brother and sister. "If it's a heifer, it's teh be mine." The sheriff. Arrested for stealing the diamonds. "Let me knock yer durned head off." The jewels found in Bernice's trunk.

Act 3. Parlor of the Halstead home. "That was a lucky stroke—hiding those diamonds in her trunk." The schemer's plot miscarries. Abe and Sammy join hands. The lawyer. "Bully for her." Bradley tries to escape. "No, ye don't!" Arrested. "It means, dear, that you are to be persecuted no more." Wedding presents, and a war dance around them. "It is ne trick at all to fool a yov'g doctor."

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Hageman's Make-Up Book

By MAURICE HAGEMAN

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The importance of an effective make-up is becoming more apparent to the professional actor every year, but hitherto there has been no book on the subject describing the modern methods and at the same time covering all branches of the art. This want has now been filled. Mr. Hageman has had an experience of twenty years as actor and stage-manager, and his well-known literary ability has enabled him to put the knowledge so gained into shape to be of use to others. The book is an encyclopedia of the art of making up. Every branch of the subject is exhaustively treated, and few questions can be asked by professional or amateur that cannot be answered by this admirable hand-book. It is not only the best make-up book ever published, but it is not likely to be superseded by any other. It is absolutely indispensable to every ambitious actor.

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Chapter IV. Preliminaries before Making up; the Straight Make-up and how to remove it.

Chapter V. Remarks to Ladies. Liquid Creams, Rouge, Lips, Eyebrows, Eyelashes, Character Roles, Jewelry, Removing Make-up.

Chapter VI. Juveniles. Straight Juvenile Make-up, Society Men, Young Men in Ill Health, with Red Wigs, Rococo Make-up, Hands, Wrists, Cheeks, etc.

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Chapter X. Other Exposed Parts of the Human Anatomy.

Chapter XI. Wigs, Beards, Moustaches, and Eyebrows. Choosing a Wig, Powdering the Hair, Dimensions for Wigs, Wig Bands, Bald Wigs, Ladies' Wigs, Beards on Wire, on Gauze, Crape Hair, Wool, Beards for Tramps, Moustaches, Eyebrows.

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